

Institutional Dimensions of Professional Knowledge: Implications for School
Administrators' Constructions of Equitable Leadership Knowledge in Kenya and Canada

Perez Oyugi, BA, BEd, MEd

Department of Graduate and Undergraduate
Studies in Education

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Faculty of Education, Brock University
St. Catharines, Ontario

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Abstract

This international comparative study employed a constructivist grounded theory approach to explore the influence of institutional factors on school administrators' constructions of equitable leadership knowledge and practice in Kenya and Canada. Six principals and vice principals from Kisumu County, Kenya and 5 from Ontario, Canada participated in the study. An institutional theory lens is used to compare and illuminate the processes school administrators used to link institutional imperatives to equitable leadership knowledge and practice. First, the results indicate that equitable leadership is an emerging concept in Kenya among school principals. Second, the results confirm that equitable leadership knowledge and practice is nested within regulative, normative, and cognitive pillars that underlie educational institutions in Kenya and Canada. Third, results show that equitable leadership knowledge arose out of interactions between institutional actors and from institutional processes for sensemaking and for organizing knowledge in both countries. Fourth, a three-stage process theory—mimetic, normalizing, and transference stages—emerged from the data to connect equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations.

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Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
List of Figures	vi
 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	 1
Background: Context and Issues	2
Problem Statement	16
Purpose of the Study	18
Research Questions	18
Conceptual Framework	19
Significance and Scope of the Study	32
Organization of the Thesis	34
 CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	 36
Institutional Theory and Educational Institutions	36
Educational Leadership Knowledge: General Concepts	60
Equitable Leadership in Education	66
Institutional Texts and Equitable Leadership Knowledge	80
 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS	 91
Research Design and Methods	91
Site and Participant Selection	93
Recruitment	95
Data Collection	96
Data Analysis	98
Ethical Considerations	102
Limitations of the Study	104
 CHAPTER FOUR: STUDY FINDINGS	 106
Conceptualizing Equitable Leadership in Education	107
Equitable Leadership Knowledge Concepts	128
Ties That Bind: Knowledge and Institutions	149
Equitable Leadership Policy and Practice Challenges	162
 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	 179
Making Sense of Equitable Leadership	180
Contextual Equitable Leadership Imperatives and Challenges	209
Institutionalization Processes and a Theory	231
Stages of Process Theory	239
Implications and Recommendations for Theory, Practice, and Research	246
Conclusion	258

References	260
Appendix A: Interview Questions	287
Appendix B: Participant List	289
Appendix C: Consent Form	290
Appendix D: TCPS 2: CORE – Certificate of Completion	293
Appendix E: Brock University Research Ethics Board Clearance Letter.....	294

List of Figures

Figure	Page
1. Conceptual framework.....	27
2. Process theory	241

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Equity and diversity have been educational concerns for decades across the globe. Strategies to address these concerns as well as how the issues are understood are often mediated by socially constructed knowledge and reflect the rules and structures of society that are nested within complex layers of social norms (Armstrong, 2010; Armstrong & Mitchell, 2017; Walton, 2010). This international comparative study explores the influence of institutional factors on Kenyan and Canadian school principals' constructions of equitable leadership knowledge and practice. A secondary purpose of the study is to generate a theory on the processes that school principals use to link institutional imperatives to their knowledge and practice. Using the issue of equity and inclusive education as an entry point, the study explores school principals' constructions of equitable leadership knowledge when addressing complex educational issues as a means of illuminating how conceptions of knowledge and practice represent theoretical and ideological constructs designed to organize social life.

To illuminate inherent complexities associated with equitable leadership, the study uses a constructivist grounded theory approach within a qualitative design (Charmaz, 2011) to explore how institutional obligations nested in normative, regulative, and cognitive educational pillars influence school administrators' constructions of equitable leadership knowledge and practice in Kenya and Canada. The overarching question for the study is: How do institutional factors influence school administrators' constructions of knowledge and practice related to equitable leadership in Kenya and Canada? This chapter provides an introduction to the issue and a background to equitable leadership knowledge and practice, which is germane to the study. The chapter also

presents the problem statement, purpose of the study, conceptual framework, and limitations of the study, and outlines the organization of the thesis.

Background: Context and Issues

Concerns related to equitable access, outcomes, and participation of all students as well as the ability of all students to realize their full potential through schooling are at the centre of the debate on equity and inclusive education (see Artiles, 2011; Dantley & Tillman, 2010; Ghosh & Abdi, 2013; McMahon & Armstrong, 2010; Phasha & Moichela, 2013; Portelli, Shields, & Vibert, 2007; Ryan, 2012; Theoharis & Brooks, 2012). Students in Canadian schools tend to reflect the diversity of Canadian society based on its rich immigration history. Yet, many students and families who are not a part of the dominant culture in these schools often face substantial barriers to learning (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). These students who are not part of the dominant culture include racialized minorities, students with disabilities, and students from low-income families. Other aspects of social difference include language, religion, gender, physical and intellectual ability, sexual orientation, and other factors. Similarly, conversations about access and equity in Canada can be traced back to more than 20 years to multiculturalism policies of the 1990s. Despite more than two decades of talking about equity and inclusion and multicultural policies in Ontario schools, minority students continue to be marginalized (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013). Using racialized groups as an example, Bécares and Priest (2015) argue that race and ethnicity often determine

Membership to the most disadvantaged classes. ... Black students were more likely than White boys to be assigned to all classes of disadvantage as compared to the most advantaged class, and this was particularly strong for the most

disadvantaged class, which included elements of both individual- and contextual-level disadvantage. (p. 2)

Furthermore, racialized students are disproportionately streamed into vocational programs, experience higher rates of academic failure, suspension, and expulsion as well as lower teacher expectations (McMahon & Armstrong, 2010; Ryan, 2012). Studies also indicate “inequitable distribution of high success rates across program streams” (Anderson & Jaafar, 2006, p. 18) and a disproportionate failure rate for these groups in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). According to Davis and Armstrong (2012), racialized minorities do not have the same levels of access or success as their White peers in Canada. They also argue that inequitable access and outcomes for racialized groups is partly because many school administrators do not perceive racism as a problem in schools. Finally, Ryan (2012) contends that these students fail because school administrators are unprepared for the challenges of achieving racial equity.

Another area of inequitable access relates to students with disabilities. As Rougour (2012) states, students with disabilities experience isolation, awkwardness, and embarrassment as a result of physical, attitudinal, and systemic barriers. In this case, disability refers to a range of conditions. These include physical, mental, and learning deficits; mental disorders; hearing or vision impairment; epilepsy; drug and/or alcohol dependencies; and environmental sensitivities (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2008). These concepts of disability are interwoven with social difference (Portelli et al., 2007). For instance, O’Connor and Fernandez (2006) argue that effects of organic and physical disabilities on educational performance are greatly deflected by dominant race and class identities. Some studies also show that in many educational institutions, the

physical, architectural, and attitudinal impediments do not meet basic accessibility and equity standards (Rougour, 2012). Consequently, differential access continue despite Ontarians with Disabilities Act (Government of Ontario, 2001) stipulating that schools must identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.

Current equity and inclusive education practices in Ontario are built upon Ontario's prior multicultural policies, school anti-racism policies (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013), Canadian laws, and international covenants. More recently, the Ontario Ministry of Education developed an Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy. The goal of the Strategy is to advance "three core priorities" of improving student achievement, reducing achievement gaps, and increasing public confidence in the education system (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 5). Furthermore, the Ministry of Education noted that these core priorities could be achieved through shared and committed leadership; equity and inclusive education policies and practices; and accountability and transparency. As a result, equity and inclusion are identified among Canadian educational values. These terminologies are considered as a common catch-phrase in Canada (Portelli et al., 2007) and reflect rights-based and democratic orientations to education.

Despite the stated intent of equity and inclusive education policies and values, many students continue to be excluded and isolated (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013; McMahon & Armstrong, 2010; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009; Portelli et al., 2007; Walton, 2010). Minority student interests are systematically excluded through the rules, processes, and accountability mechanisms that influence schooling in Canada. These exclusions relate to school cultures that tend to reduce complexities associated with teaching and learning to narrow assumptions regarding what counts as objective

knowledge and which inform standardized instruction, assessments, and benchmarking practices (McLaren, Macrine, & Hill, 2010). These exclusions are therefore tied to relations of power that structure and are structured by recursive knowledge/power relations. They are also tied to deficit pathologies, understood as assumed deficiencies based on difference, and ontologies that blame student differences on inequitable access and outcomes (Artiles, 2011; Portelli et al., 2007).

With respect to Kenya, sustained conversations are just starting to occur regarding equity and inclusion in education. As such, terminologies such as equitable leadership and social justice leadership in education are in their formative stages. Based on this development stage, few studies address issues of equity, inclusion, and equitable leadership in education. However, differential access and outcomes are important educational concerns. For example, the revised constitution of Kenya of 2010 and *The Basic Education Act 2013* (Ministry of Education, 2013) give prominence to access and equity in education in Kenya. These documents are guided by the right of every child to access quality education and, according to UNESCO (2009), are irrespective of differences arising from race, gender, language, income, family, ethnicity, and religion.

Beyond the lack of empirical studies on equitable leadership based on my literature review, many schools in Africa, including Kenya, deal with diverse groups of learners. These diversities include “ability, race, religion, culture, language, health, socio-economic status, and gender” (Phasha & Moichela, 2013, p. 373). Differential access and inequity in Kenya are also associated with dis/abilities, poverty, inadequate educational infrastructure and supports, assessment practices, and school admission and placement criteria. For example, equity and inclusion in education in Kenya is traditionally centered

on students with disabilities and on special needs students (Aseka & Kanter, 2014; Phasha & Miochela, 2013) since “many children with disabilities are not allowed to attend school at all, and those who do attend school are not allowed to attend school with nondisabled children” (Aseka & Kanter, 2014, p. 45). Further, although the revised constitution of Kenya of 2010 and *The Basic Education Act 2013* confirm the right of all children to education, students with disabilities still experience inequitable access and outcomes. For these students, inequitable access and outcomes are linked to the practice of streaming into separate schools/segregation and the lack of adequate supports.

Students from low-income families and those who attend schools in poor communities in Kenya experience varying degrees of access and outcomes because of lack of adequate teaching and learning resources compared to students in private schools, national schools, and those who learn in affluent communities. According to Baguma and Aheisibwe (2013), most schools in Africa, including Kenya, “operate with either substandard or inadequate facilities” (p. 25). Onderi and Makori (2013) confirm that inadequate learning facilities, a common feature in many Kenyan schools, have a significant impact on student access and participation in secondary education, and also note that “schools with adequate facilities perform better in national examinations especially in core subjects such as mathematics” (p. 68). The problem of access and equity is compounded for learners in schools that are located in poor and remote communities. These schools, with learners who are mainly from low-income families, do not have adequate facilities and the resources to provide supportive facilities that can help students realize their full potential. Furthermore, inequitable access and outcomes are compounded when students are unable to pay school fees, unable to buy books,

experience shortages of school equipment and physical facilities, and have to travel long distances to attend the nearest school (Kitavi & Van Der Westhuizen, 1997), such as the case in some communities in Kenya.

Continued poor performance in national examinations of many Kenyan students (Atieno & Simatwa, 2012) is indicative that something is amiss with the current school practices related to student assessment, teaching, and placement. For example, anecdotal information and a review of student performance in prior Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examinations (KCSE) show that approximately 60% of Kenyan students in certain classification of schools (county and sub-county schools) fail their Grade 12 (KCSE) examinations. Most recently, out of 577,000 students country-wide who sat the 2016 KCSE exams, only 15% (89,000 students) attained the required mean grade of C+ to gain admission into Kenyan public universities (“Calls Grow,” 2017) compared to 53.4% (427,304) in 2015 and 30.78% in 2014 (Ndonga, 2016). These mass student failures garnered a lot of public interest in the education system, perhaps because of the large number of students in all categories of schools who were impacted. The 2016 results mean that more than 80% of the 2016 cohort do not have the required marks to join public universities. The only option for these students is admission to private universities, where tuition costs can be triple the amounts charged in public universities.

Although there were changes to exam administration that may have given rise to the mass student failure in 2016 KCSE exams, other narratives indicate that the majority of students failed because of perennial teachers’ strikes and lack of learning materials (Ndonga, 2016), assessment practices, school admission and placement criteria, and teaching practices in schools. Musau (2017) contends that teachers also contributed to

student failures by instilling fear in students. Elaborating, he argued that students are often afraid of being punished for giving incorrect answers. Out of fear, some students pretend they understand what is being taught, instead of risking punishment.

Concerns with equity and inclusion also arise when inequitable outcomes are blamed on the students through narratives, such as students' poor performance in KCSE exams being attributed to those students' lack of discipline or motivation to do well in exams. For example, Atieno and Simatwa's (2012) study with school principals note that

Less motivated students perform poorly in examinations and they are undisciplined students... trouble causers at school and in the long run drop out of school... less motivated students lacked learning culture and these resulted into high drop outs and poor performance in national examinations. (p. 396)

Likewise, Kiumi, Bosire, and Sang (2009) call on school administrators to enhance disciplined behaviour in schools so that their students can excel in their educational endeavours. Implicitly, instead of focusing on the root causes of inequitable outcomes based on poor performance in exams for these students, school administrators focus on what they construct as problematic behaviours located in the student.

Irrespective of why students failed in 2016 KCSE or in prior KCSE exams, a fundamental question of equity is the ability of these students to realize their full potential. More importantly, there are more questions than answers, such as: Are these students innocent victims of an education system that relies on problematic assumptions related to teaching, curriculum, assessment, and accountability? Are students being victimized by an educational system that is blinded by meritocracy to the extent that it is willing to sacrifice students to maintain existing social arrangements? Ultimately, the

inability of so many students, particularly from schools located in low-income areas, to continue with their education and/or benefit from schooling has long term negative consequences related to equity and inclusion that is related to class and ethnicity.

As this brief exploration of context and issue suggests, students in Kenyan and Canadian schools experience varying degrees of access and outcomes based on the differences that the students bring into the educational environments. Unfortunately, some of these differences are based on problematic constructions and have very little to do with individual abilities. The differences are also treated as surface issues or celebrated without questioning unequal power relations embedded in them (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013). Perhaps then, the complexities and diversities inherent in differential access and outcomes that persist in Kenyan and Canadian schools are linked to knowledge assumptions that cannot ensure equity, inclusion, and social justice for students experiencing inequitable access and outcomes (Cherkowski & Ragoonaden, 2016).

The foregoing also suggest that Kenya and Canada are at different starting points historically and in their approach to equity and inclusion in education. Despite jurisdictional differences, equity and inclusion in education revolve around the differences in treatment, access, and outcomes that students continue to experience in the process of schooling. Inequity and exclusion are supported ideologically and institutionally through a denial of the “moral equivalence” of all learners (El-Haj, 2007, p. 2) when educational ideologies and knowledge assumptions exclude or fail to incorporate complexities and contexts that do not reflect majority interests. Therefore, schools and school administrators have a moral responsibility to enact equity practices in their schools and to eliminate disparities of access and outcomes. Such equity practices

require school administrators to understand underlying knowledge assumptions related to equity and inclusive education. It also requires an awareness of the intersecting networks of relationships that reflect institutionally sanctioned “ways to do leading and leadership” (Thomson, Gunter, & Blackmore, 2013, p. viii).

Equitable Leadership Imperative

School leadership is a high-priority issue for many people concerned with education globally. In both Kenya and Canada, school leaders are expected to respond to issues of inequitable access and outcomes in their schools while taking into account the various complexities that characterize their educational environments. They are also expected to play a vital role in establishing, improving, and maintaining high-quality education that serves all students (Theoharis & Brooks, 2012). Furthermore, it is increasingly recognized that effective leadership is vital if schools are to be successful in providing good learning opportunities for students (Bush, Kiggundu, & Moorosi, 2011); implementing education goals, managing resources, and ensuring student success (Jwan & Ongodo, 2011); and ensuring equitable outcomes. As a result, ensuring that all students benefit from the process of schooling demands nothing less than inclusive practices and the ability of school leaders to imagine other leadership possibilities, even at the risk of professional sanctioning (Beachum, Dentith, McCray, & Boyle, 2008).

Education is characterized by diversity, complexity, and demands for equity from individuals and groups competing for scarce educational resources. In the process of competing for scarce resources, some groups are excluded while others are included. Equity and inclusion in education is an ongoing concern in educational leadership discourse. Within this discourse, the concept of equity engenders diverse interpretations

and strategies that are often based on individual understandings of their theoretical underpinnings (Dantley & Tillman, 2010). Whilst different interpretations exist about equity, equitable leadership presents one possibility for redressing persistent disparities and inequities for students (Theoharis, 2010). It also presents educators with opportunities to establish, improve, and maintain high-quality education that serves all students (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Oyugi, 2013; Theoharis, 2009). Through equitable leadership, individuals can disrupt unequal relations that exist in education, emphasize the educative side of leadership, critique existing patterns of privilege (Ryan, 2006), and promote inclusion. Therefore, while educational leadership has only recently been associated with equity and social justice (Ryan, 2010), equitable leadership is vital if education is to deliver intended benefits to all students and contribute to opening up democratic space (Ryan, 2010; Theoharis, 2010).

Educational leadership is embedded in a collection of patterned actions (Elmore, 2006) that draw on a set of knowledge assumptions grounded primarily in structural functionalism that stresses order, stability, and conformity (Capper & Green, 2010). In addition, Astley (1985) contends that the knowledge that constitutes administrative science is socially constructed and mediated by theoretical preconceptions. Expressing similar sentiments, Popkewitz (1990) argues that schooling as a socially constructed enterprise contains continuing contradictions. Lumby (2010) reiterates that there is a relationship between knowledge production, theory, and practice. At the core of these knowledge assumptions therefore are actions, values, and experiences that are both unique to individuals and those that are shared with members of their community. Equitable leadership, as a subset of educational leadership is similarly mediated by diverse knowledge regimes and patterned actions that occur in institutional settings that

value conformity and maintenance of existing social relations (Ryan, 2006). Because of these knowledge assumptions, a tension exists for educational administrators between leadership practices that arise out of structural functionalist orientations and the demands for equitable and inclusive schools. In light of these tensions and competing knowledge regimes, equitable leaders must reconceptualize their everyday work to ensure equity and inclusion in education (Theoharis, 2004). Otherwise, they can legitimize “dominant constructions of organizational and social reality” (Anderson, 1990, p. 38). Their actions can also solidify unequal power relationships through informal and formal sanctioning which serve or impede the others’ interests (Miller, 2012; Oyugi, 2013; Scott, 2013).

Schools and educational leaders rely on the various structures that underlie education to achieve schools’ educative mission of knowledge transmission, acquisition, and dissemination. Specifically, institutions, including educational institutions, comprise three pillars or elements—regulative, normative, and cultural cognitive—which “together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life” (Scott, 2013, p. 56). These pillars represent “central building blocks of institutional structures, providing the elastic fibres that guide behaviour” (Scott, 2013, p. 57) of actors in various relations of power. Specifically, as Scott (2013) posits,

Regulative elements stress rule-setting, monitoring, and sanctioning activities...

Normative elements introduce a prescriptive, evaluative, and obligatory

dimension into social life... and cultural-cognitive elements emphasize the shared

conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through

which meaning is made. (pp. 54-57)

In other words, the regulative pillar is built upon explicit regulatory processes, including rules and sanctions that structure individual, group, and institutional behaviour. The

normative pillar revolves around values and norms that define institutional goals, objectives, and ways of achieving them, whereas the cultural-cognitive institutional pillar is built upon knowledge assumptions and shared beliefs regarding the nature of reality. In the case of equity and inclusive education, knowledge assumptions and shared logics arise as actors engage in iterative and routine institutional activities (Scott, 2008a, 2008b) that reproduce social life and as they interpret knowledge meanings during social interaction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Essentially, equitable leadership knowledge is rooted in institutional practices and systems of knowledge that are both local and global.

Institutional pillars relate to disparate constructs of how individuals make choices and the attendant restrictions based on assumptions and institutional definitions of the legal, moral, and cultural boundaries related to their choices (Scott, 2013). These pillars bring up different conceptions of educational reality depending on whether school administrators perceive their choices to be legally sanctioned, morally governed, or culturally supported. In the case of equitable leadership, these pillars can be deployed to address persistent educational inequities that arise because the very issues that cause inequity in education, such as those related to race, ability, poverty, and so forth are situated at the periphery of dominant educational discourses. However, the efficiencies of equitable leaders can be doubtful if they do not understand how these pillars influence their practice or how they relate to “changing social and historical contexts” of education that marginalize some students (Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009, p. 12). Thus, it is vital to understand knowledge assumptions, including those that are structurally induced, that inform equity and inclusive education knowledge and practice in Kenya and Canada. The understanding being, while institutional pillars can serve as a means to achieve

equity and inclusive education goals, they can maintain existing social relations by providing stability through particular knowledge objects, guiding behaviour and ensuring compliance through coercion (Scott, 2008a, 2013).

Equitable leadership knowledge and practice inhabit a contested knowledge and practice terrain that cannot be separated from the invisible ways that social life is constructed. In particular, institutional knowledge is determined in ways that help individuals justify their actions (Scott, 2013; Smith, 2005), including how individuals construct, transmit, disseminate, and make sense of equitable leadership knowledge in education. An institutional perspective of equitable leadership therefore will help school administrators understand how institutional pillars influence their knowledge and practice. It will also contribute to a better understanding of actions that ensure equal social relations within schools, and contribute to shared conceptions through which meaning is made as new realities emerge in international and local educational contexts.

Consequently, the choice to undertake an international comparative study and to locate the study in Kenya and Canada is threefold. First, educators work in institutional settings that value conformity and are socialized to maintain existing social relations (Ryan, 2006) through existing knowledge regimes. In addition, the inherent diversity in schools in Kenya and Canada demand nothing less than inclusion. However, school administrators who dare to imagine other possibilities often do so at the risk of being sanctioned and/or meet resistance (Beachum et al., 2008). Therefore, given the importance of equity and inclusion in education globally, it is vital to understand how local and internationally oriented institutional texts inform equitable leadership knowledge and practices. More precisely, international comparative studies can help to

identify and question beliefs and assumptions that are taken for granted (National Research Council, 2003, p. 10) and provide clarity regarding differences and similarities in equitable leadership knowledge and practice in Kenya and Canada.

Second, education is “characterized by increased technological, information, and pedagogical transfer” within and across jurisdictions (Adamson, 2012, p. 641). Many leadership studies conducted in Africa are the products of conceptual tools and topics imported from other parts of the world (Asuga & Eacott, 2014; Christie, 2010). Equitable leadership literature is also dominated by scholarship that focuses on educational concerns in the West and largely reflect euro-centric educational narratives. This study therefore, contributes to equity and inclusive education research by documenting the existence of a much broader array of equitable leadership practices by comparing understandings of knowledge and practice in Kenya and Canada. Study results also expand understanding of education and provide ideas about practices related to equity and inclusive education.

Third, the roots of my scholarly identity run deep in both countries based on years of formal schooling and lived experience in Ontario and Kisumu County. I have worked in educational institutions in Kisumu, Kenya and Ontario, Canada. Grounding the study in these two educational contexts, therefore, honours my layers of experience and multiple scholarly identities and interrelationships. Similarly, as a scholar and educational leader vested in equity and inclusive education issues, I have continually examined complexities related to teaching and leadership from a theory-practice nexus in both countries. Throughout my scholarship, I have problematized underlying knowledge assumptions and institutionally mandated knowledge requirements that inform inclusive

education, leadership practices, and educational policies. Therefore, continuing my examination of equitable leadership issues in Kenya and Canada allows me to contribute to the conversation at an international level.

Problem Statement

School boards, ministries of education, students, and other stakeholders expect their respective school leaders to include an equity agenda (Ross & Berger, 2009) as implementers of equity and inclusive educational policies. Specifically, equitable leadership knowledge and the principalship are mediated by socially constructed and dominant knowledge regimes (Anderson, 1990; Smith, 2005) that are both local and international. Equitable leadership also relies on existing institutional structures to address issues of equity and inclusion in education. However, it is unclear how various institutional obligations are prioritized in practice (Scott, 2008a; Spillane, Parise, & Sherer, 2011) or how the institutional pillars (regulative, normative, and cognitive) contribute to individual understandings of equitable leadership knowledge and practice. Similarly, limited studies exist that use an institutional lens to illuminate how individuals connect equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations or how institutional contexts, realities, and structures influence the cognitive frameworks of educational leaders (Bolman & Deal, 1993; Lin & Cheng, 2010). In addition, few studies adopt an institutional lens to analyze the processes that school administrators use to transform institutional ideas into action (Scott, 2004; Suddaby, 2010; Udo-Akang, 2012). Where such studies exist, such as those on principals' cognition, they focus on principals' behaviour and character (Lin & Cheng, 2010) or the "externals, the behaviours of the individual" (Greenfield, 2009, p. vii) instead of how externals inform internal knowledge

constructions related to the principalship. Therefore, this study aims to illuminate how individuals connect equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations in different educational contexts.

Knowledge concepts that influence equitable leadership and administrative practice are often abstracted from daily actions (Lazaridou, 2009). As such, when dealing with unfamiliar, complex, and unstructured equitable leadership issues, tacit knowledge is critical because it regulates how context-specific knowledge is adapted and applied (Lazaridou, 2009; Leo & Wickenberg, 2013). However, since school leadership is embedded in “processes of negotiation that take into consideration the demands of the moment, the institutional structure, and the historical definitions of power and relationships” (Smulyan, 2000, p. 6), school administrators need to adjust their knowledge preconceptions (Morford, 2002) to address equity and inclusive education issues. Hence, it is common for school administrators to experience uncertainty as they face new challenges (Bengtson, Zepeda, & Parylo, 2013). These feelings of uncertainty can be exacerbated when individuals cannot connect abstract knowledge to their actions.

Students who do not reflect the dominant groups in society will probably continue to fail to realize their full potential through education unless school administrators take immediate steps to eliminate disparities of access and outcomes that arise out of institutionally sanctioned unequal power relations. Importantly, to enact equitable leadership practices, school administrators must understand the institutional pillars that constrain and/or empower their actions. They must also understand the abstract ideas that undergird equitable leadership knowledge concepts and productively interrogate how institutionally driven equitable leadership knowledge concepts in/exclude some students. Through productive interrogation of knowledge assumptions, these individuals will be in

a better position to transform abstract equitable leadership ideas into action and elucidate the ontological origins of their equitable leadership knowledge and the institutional factors that influence their knowledge and practice. If school principals do not connect abstract equitable leadership knowledge to their practice or understand the institutional obligations that inform their knowledge and practice, they can unknowingly solidify unequal power relations. They can also import practice concepts that are unsuitable for their educational contexts and contradict their beliefs (Oliva, Anderson, & Byng, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this international comparative study is to build understanding regarding equitable leadership knowledge and practice in two different educational and national settings. Primarily, the study probes institutional factors that influence school administrators' constructions of equitable leadership knowledge and practice in Kenya and Canada. A secondary purpose of the study was to generate a theory on the processes that school administrators use to link institutional imperatives to their knowledge and practice. Additionally, this is an international comparative study focusing on the influence of norms, regulations, and assumed knowledge on equitable leadership knowledge and practice in Kenya and Canada. Therefore, another purpose of the study is to contribute towards a global understanding of equitable leadership and to generate insights that can lead to the development of strategies for professional development of school administrators and strategies for ensuring equity and inclusion in education across educational contexts.

Research Questions

Educational institutions contribute to the creation of concepts that guide behaviour and ensure compliance within an institutional framework (Scott, 2008a).

However, the concepts that influence administrative practice are often abstracted from daily actions (Lazaridou, 2009). Similarly, when educational leaders deal with unfamiliar, complex, and unstructured challenges, tacit knowledge regulates how context-specific knowledge should be adapted and applied (Lazaridou, 2009; Leo & Wickenberg, 2013). Towards this end, the overarching question for this study is: How do institutional factors influence school administrators' constructions of knowledge and practice related to equitable leadership in Kenya and Canada?

Additional questions relevant to school administrators in Kenya and Canada to be explored here include:

1. How do regulative institutional elements influence the construction of equitable knowledge and practice of school administrators?
2. How do normative institutional elements influence the construction of equitable knowledge and practice of school administrators?
3. How do cultural-cognitive institutional elements influence the construction of equitable leadership knowledge and practice of school administrators?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is rooted in the literature review. From my analysis of the literature, it is evident that educational institutions are regulated based on traditions of schooling and embedded in a collection of patterned actions (Elmore, 2006) that draw on a set of knowledge assumptions that stress order, stability, and conformity (Capper & Green, 2010). The conceptual framework evolves from the perspective that educational institutions, like other social institutions, are social constructions whose structures are shaped in reaction to the participants' characteristics

and commitments as well as environmental influences and constraints (Miller, 2012; Scott, 2001, 2004, 2013; Turner, 1997). By extension, this conceptual framework locates equitable leadership knowledge in institutional structures that anchor equity and inclusive education. These include structures that are shaped by schooling traditions and those that promote equitable access and opportunities for educational success regardless of race, gender, or family income. The conceptual framework also draws on the use of equitable leadership to understand equity and inclusive education commitments embedded in educational texts, norms, values, and traditions despite the persistent disparities in access and outcomes that arise out of marginalizing institutional practices (Theoharis, 2010). Finally, drawing on equitable leadership helps to illuminate unequal social relations embedded in educational practices and policies and those that systematically perpetuate injustice (Marshall & Oliva, 2010) and result in inequity for some students.

The institutional worldview underpinning my research is grounded in qualitative research traditions and critical constructivism (Anderson, 1990; Kincheloe, 2005). The grounding in qualitative approaches ensures that the conceptual framework can help to illuminate the underlying issues, contexts, meanings, and the subjectivities inherent in knowledge constructs, and by extension equitable leadership. Critical constructivism on the other hand, problematizes the nature of reality and knowledge by reflecting on the emancipatory ideals of critical theory (Anderson, 1990; Kincheloe, 2005). Critical constructivist perspectives are also concerned with emancipating individuals from unjust and oppressive power structures (Ball, 1993; Foster, 1989). Critical constructivism makes an ontological claim that reality is socially constructed (Anderson, 1990). Concurring, Bentley (2003) argues that critical constructivist approaches emphasize the social nature

of knowledge construction. The underlying argument being “nothing exists before consciousness shapes it into something perceptible” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 8). Larochelle (1999) also claims that reality is a product of intersubjective social constructions. As such, incorporating a critical constructivist standpoint allows me as a researcher to pay attention to the invisible and obtrusive forms of control within institutions as well as the interplay of power, structure and norms on reality construction. Furthermore, a critical constructivist standpoint can help explain processes through which individuals develop equitable leadership “narratives and explanations which enable them not only to operate viably in their everyday lives” (Larochelle, 1999, p. 69) and how they participate in the habits and customs of educational institutions.

The use of institutional theory offers key insights into equitable leadership knowledge and practice through considerations of institutionalization processes, sensemaking within institutions, educational structures, norms, and socially created institutional realities. Institutional theory also provides a means for uncovering aspects of equitable leadership practice that are influenced by institutional structures, which are not only rationalized and taken-for-granted, but embedded within cognitive and normative educational concepts. Specifically, this conceptual framework adapts Scott’s (2008a, 2013) analytic framework that outline three pillars of institutions. Berger and Luckmann’s (1966) work also helps to illuminate how equitable leadership knowledge was internalized, objectified, and externalized in educational settings.

The framework is also infused with Dorothy Smith’s ideas around ruling relations that are embedded in every day institutional text and discourse and Foucault’s ideas on dualities of institutional power. For example, in *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology*

for People, Smith (2005) offers an ontology of the social, by focusing on ruling relations that are embedded in every day institutional text and discourse. Within this body of work, ruling relations are understood as forces outside the individual which order and coordinate their activities and actions in and across multiple settings. Specifically, Smith (1990) contends that ruling relations refer to “extra-local relations that provide in contemporary societies a specialization of organization, control, and initiative. They are those forms that we know as bureaucracy, administration, management, professional organization, and the media” (p. 6). Using examples of concepts derived from sociology, such as mental illness, poverty, unemployment, and disability, she notes that although these concepts are constructed by bureaucratic, legal, and professional organizations, they coordinate and order lives of individuals. Her central argument being, externally constructed concepts are used to rule people, hence ruling relations.

Expressing similar sentiments in their primer on doing institutional ethnography, Campbell and Gregor (2002) contend that everyday lives are coordinated through “the interplay of social relations, of people’s ordinary activities being concerted and coordinated purposefully” (p. 27). Inferring from Smith’s work, equitable leadership cannot be wholly understood from simply looking at the local setting in which school administrators operate but requires one to go beyond the local. It is also arguable that the lived reality of equitable leaders is located in how their “activities and practices are coordinated” (Smith, 2005, p. 59). Therefore, of relevance to the present endeavour is how textual relations or knowledge regimes and obligations embedded in institutional texts organize everyday equity and inclusive education practices. Also of interest is the

extent to which equitable leadership knowledge texts are rooted in institutional language and/or rules, codes of conduct, policies, and procedures that contribute to sensemaking.

With the individuals' experience as the point of entry into inquiry, Smith (1987, 1990, 2005) explores the connections between people's everyday lives, institutional processes, and text-based forms of knowledge. A fundamental assumption that underlies this body of work is that text-based forms of knowledge play a central role in shaping and coordinating people's lives in local and global settings when knowledge invented in one location, such as human rights law in the case of equity and inclusive education, becomes packaged in texts and is replicated in multiple locations to regulate local activities and organize social relations (Campbell & Gregor, 2002; Smith, 1987, 1990, 2005). In essence, the social organization of everyday lives cannot be wholly understood from simply looking at the local setting (Smith, 2005). For equitable leadership, Smith's work provides an avenue to look beyond the individual actions to understand equitable leadership knowledge constructs at the local and global stage. Similarly, given that these knowledge can represent "conceptually constructed entities that lack determinate referents" (Smith, 2005, p. 56), one needs to peel these constructed layers to make clear how equitable leadership knowledge is coordinated in and across various and multiple local settings. Therefore, Smith's ideas on ruling relations are important for capturing the interplay of equitable leadership knowledge and practice located in text-based forms of knowledge that shape everyday equitable leadership activities. Smith's work is also useful for illuminating how "thoughts and ideas move reciprocally between individual people and the realm of the social" (2005, p. xii).

Foucault's work on dualities of institutional power offer key insights that are applicable to equitable leadership knowledge and discourse. Although Foucault's work fits better in the arena of critical theory and ideology theory, his works on how cultural and institutional systems (re)produce social order justifies inclusion. According to Foucault, institutional power is organized into dually ordered system of power and knowledge truths that give rise to various forms of social life, inform underlying institutional logic, and constitute systems of meaning. Foucault (1982) refers to *subjection* power, a type of power that make individuals subjects because of the ways it

Applies itself to the everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize on him. (p. 212)

Foucault argues that this social construction of subjects leads to different controls and differential treatment predicated on those constructions since they represent the structures that create, validate, and enforce specific social realities. Relating Foucault's work to power in institutions, Mohr and Neely (2009) contend that the social construction of subjects "as a system of totemic classifications leads to the differential treatment of some categories of humans who are set off against the rest" (p. 217). Therefore, when socially constructed knowledge is viewed as knowledge truths, the latter can shape equitable leadership practices based on existing social relations.

The other aspect of institutional power focus on materiality or logic of practice (Foucault, 1980). Materiality of practice relates to how power is embodied. This includes the embodiment of power in local contexts through a system of policies, rules, and "technical processes, in institutions, in patterns of general behavior" (Foucault, 1977, p.

200). For example, equity and inclusive education discourses are embedded in rules, laws, policies, procedures, and norms that are viewed as knowledge truths as opposed to being contingent, constructed, and contested. As knowledge truths, the discourses impact how social life is constituted and how individual lives within institutions are ordered (Foucault, 1972, 1977, 1980, 1982). Put another way, the ways of knowing and the ways of acting are mutually constituted and dually ordered (Mohr & Neely, 2009).

Incorporating Foucault's ideas help to illuminate equitable leadership discursive events as instances of sociocultural practice that reflect meaningful and coherent institutional knowledge that are neither random nor arbitrary. Discursive practices determine which "knowledge is considered legitimate and valid" for the resolution of educational issues as well as the ways of "looking at, and of structuring the world" (Gillies, 2013, p. 10) that are associated with equity and inclusive education vocabulary and concepts. Manifestations of these discursive practices include: equitable leadership concepts; legitimate stakeholders; treatment of individuals; leadership accreditation, regulations, and knowledge; and strategies, assessments, and policies. Implicitly, equitable leadership, equity, and inclusive education as discursive practices are created by and create their own regimes of truth that are approved and authorized within existing social relations. These knowledge domains and processes for transmitting and creating equitable leadership knowledge in turn reflect institutional discourses and normalizing powers.

Finally, Scott's (2008a, 2013) analytic framework identifies three distinct pillars—regulative, normative, and cultural cognitive—that underlie institutional structure. These three institutional pillars, Scott (2008a) states, provide individuals with a rationale for legitimacy based on the basis of their understanding that they are "legally sanctioned,

morally authorized, or culturally supported” (p. 51). At the same time, although Scott (2008a, 2013) presents these pillars as fundamentally different, in reality the three pillars are interdependent and mutually reinforce one another. For this study, I draw upon these pillars to analyze professional norms; rules, laws, and regulations; and constitutive schema related to equitable leadership knowledge and practice. Therefore, the following graphic representation of the conceptual framework shown in Figure 1 illustrates the connections between the pillars, since keeping the pillars analytically independent and separated could weaken this conceptual framework (Hirsh, 1997).

The conceptual framework helps to demonstrate that equitable leadership knowledge and practices are nested in intersecting and interlocking networks of relationships that reflect institutionally and professionally sanctioned “ways to do leading and leadership” (Thomson et al., 2013, p. viii). The conceptual framework identifies three interrelated components, with equitable leadership at the centre because of its importance to the study and its centrality in ensuring equity and inclusion in education. Figure 1 uses cogwheels to indicate an intricate, bi-directional, and ongoing process of knowledge construction and contestation as each component is triggered by and triggers changes in other institutional pillars. They also illustrate the larger institutional process of transmitting knowledge through predictable patterns of socialization. Finally, the cogwheel illustrate that equitable leadership needs each of the pillars to work and ensure students benefit from the process of schooling.

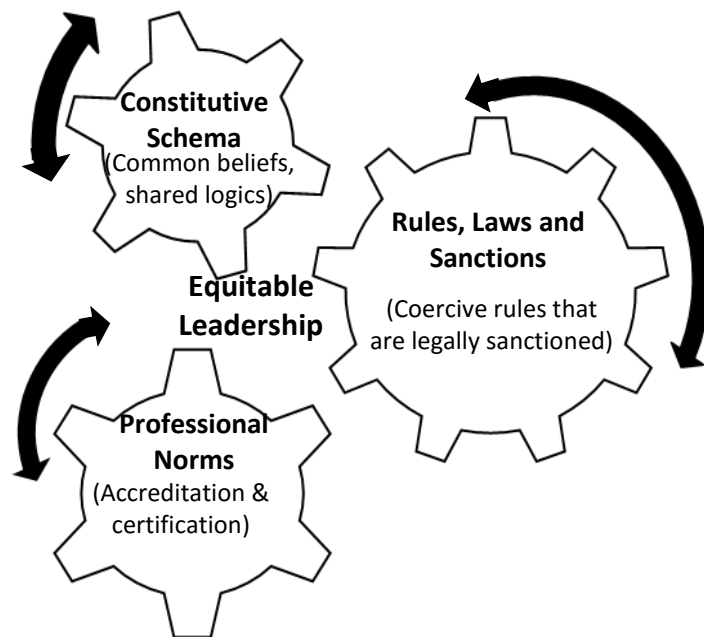


Figure 1. Conceptual framework (adapted from Scott's analytic framework).

Figure 1 identifies the different components as (a) professional norms; (b) rules, laws, and sanctions; and (c) constitutive schema that inform and influence equitable leadership knowledge and practice. The components of the framework are linked to broader ideas articulated in Scott's (2013) normative, regulative, and cognitive institutional pillars. Finally, each component, explained below, introduce and/or reinforce particular ideas and means of compliance related to equitable leadership.

Professional Norms

Professional norms are fundamental to education. In the conceptual framework, they are therefore represented with the smallest cogwheel. Normally smaller wheels have to move faster in order to keep pace with larger wheels. The use of a small cogwheel, in part, is to illustrate the speed with which professional norms can propel individuals and groups to establish new knowledge in response to environmental changes. Basically, the processes for establishing professional norms and expectations, include certification, accreditation, and socialization. Within education, these activities are intended to ensure individual and institutional conformity with specified knowledge requirements related to teaching, learning, and administration. Accreditation and certification are also intended to ensure professional competence. By extension, professional norms and expectations are at the root of the normative equitable leadership knowledge pillar.

Professional norms and expectations, as part of normative institutional pillars, emphasize the stabilizing influence of social beliefs and norms (Scott, 2013) that are related to equitable leadership. These norms act as a stabilizing influence by triggering binding expectations, norms, and values related to equitable leadership that can only be acquired through training, accreditation, certifications, and other institutionally

sanctioned ways of acquiring knowledge. Another aspect of stability is related to normative educational concepts that are tied to teaching, socialization, and monitoring systems tied to accountability, standardization, and so forth (Armstrong, 2010; Scott, 2013). In other words, professional norms trigger other ideas which represent reality by consensus, by emphasizing institutionally sanctioned rules and introducing a prescriptive, evaluative, and obligatory dimension to social life. Consequently, professional norms are vital for understanding how equitable leadership knowledge can be legitimized through certification, accreditation, values, and practices that are based on the understanding that they are morally governed and that they represent binding moral and social obligations. The professional norms component also helps to illuminate practices that are believed to demonstrate appropriate behaviours that engender equity and inclusion in education. Professional norms are often associated with professional groups, such as those for teachers and school administrators in Kenya and Canada. These groups contribute to the creation of general cognitive frameworks, normative prescriptions to guide behaviour, and exercise coercive authority (Scott, 2008a). In the case of equity and inclusion, professional groups function as institutionalizing agents by helping its members to interpret changing institutional expectations. Further, because the resulting knowledge is believed to be institutionally supported, it induces individuals to comply in order to avoid professional sanctioning and/or loss of professional credibility (Scott, 2013).

Rules, Laws, and Sanctions

Equity and inclusion in education is anchored in rules, laws, and regulations. In the illustration, the largest cogwheel is used to reflect the instrumentality of regulatory processes. The disproportionately bigger cogwheel is intended to show that regulatory

processes arise out of, and give rise to normative and cognitive pillars; take longer to achieve; and require the concerted effort of various stakeholders. In the case of equity and inclusion in education, indicators of the regulative pillar are found in “constitutions, laws, codes, directives, regulations and formal structures of control” (Scott, 2013, p. 62) that generally take long to be crafted. But once done, they authorize and sanction nearly all elements of equity and inclusion in education. Furthermore, by giving prominence to coercive and explicit regulatory processes, the regulative pillar invokes legally sanctioned rules and laws as a mechanism for compliance with the demands for equity and inclusion. The rules, laws, and sanctions component of the cogwheel focuses on equity and inclusive education rules, laws, and regulations that are legally sanctioned. For example, a number of regulatory rules related to equity and inclusion in education could be traced to the constitution in both jurisdictions and to various human rights instruments. These regulatory rules articulate penalties or means of enforcement to ensure conformity with legal expectations, rules, and regulations. The regulatory elements provide school administrators with definitions of what is acceptable and not acceptable in terms of equity and inclusion. Finally, they hold schools, school boards, and administrators accountable through sanctions, promote expedient responses to equitable leadership problems, and can trigger changes that inform professional expectations and constitutive schema.

Constitutive Schema

An important aspect of any professional practice are ideas and symbolic structures that define their professional reality (Scott, 2008a, 2008c). In education, constitutive schema refers to the collective body of knowledge that has been identified and developed related to teaching, learning, and educational administration. Thus, it is appropriate that

the third cogwheel should focus on constitutive schemas that influence common beliefs and shared logics related to equitable leadership. This pillar is closely aligned with the cultural cognitive pillar because of its focus on the cognitive dimensions related to equity and inclusive education and equitable leadership. These components of the constitutive schema outlines shared conceptions and the approaches for resolving equity and inclusive education issues. This cogwheel highlights aspects of knowledge that mediate between “the external world of stimuli and the response of the individual” (Scott, 2013, p. 67), such as internalized symbolic representations related to equitable leadership knowledge. The constitutive schema as a component of this conceptual framework plays a central role in illuminating knowledge distinctions, typifications, and generalizations related to education that inform equitable leadership. With its focus on human experiences, the cultural cognitive dimension is important for emphasizing the social constructivist approach (Rottmann, 2011) that gives rise to taken-for-granted equitable leadership knowledge assumptions and shared knowledge. In particular, constitutive schemas objectify knowledge truths based on claims that they represent a valid way to realize equity and inclusion in education. Assumptions around access, equity, and inclusion in education exemplify shared understandings that are recognizable and culturally supported constitutive schema. Individuals enact these assumptions on the understanding that the knowledge warrants are comprehensible, recognizable, and culturally supported.

In sum, the conceptual framework outlines potential relationships that exist between institutional pillars and equitable leadership knowledge and practice. It also opens up the possibility that processes and goals related to equity and inclusive education are embedded in dominant constructions of reality. Thus, the resultant discursive

practices constitute the limits of what is thinkable and what is doable within institutions (Anderson, 1990; Foster, 1989; Greenfield, 1973; Scott, 2001, 2004, 2008a, 2013; Smith, 2005). At the core of these relationships are equitable leadership actions and experiences that are unique to individuals, collectively shared with members of their professional or socio-cultural community, and structured by institutional pillars. Finally, although distinct, the pillars act together in mutually reinforcing ways to contribute to social life (Scott, 2008a, 2013) and to equitable leadership knowledge and practice.

By infusing institutional theory with critical constructivism, this conceptual framework is useful for analyzing equitable leadership concepts and institutional obligations. As outlined, the framework is useful for uncovering the invisible ways in which social interaction is structured and knowledge power wielded (see Anderson, 1990; Foster, 1989; Greenfield, 1973). As Anderson and Barrerra (1995) contend, irrespective of the “locus of analysis”, the use of a critical constructivism and institutional theory lens helps to illuminate the intersection of power and administrator actions with the phenomenon under analysis (p. 144). Therefore, this framework is suitable for elucidating the links between knowledge construction and institutional obligations while still maintaining that knowledge is contested, contingent, and socially constructed.

Significance and Scope of the Study

This international comparative study examines equitable leadership knowledge and practice from an institutional perspective and focuses on how school administrators in Kenya and Canada connected equitable leadership concepts to institutional obligations. Where studies exist that use institutional theory to examine education, their results show that regulative and normative institutional elements influenced knowledge perceptions

and practices (Ramberg, 2014). However, by adopting an international comparative stance, focusing on equitable leadership, and choosing contexts where similar studies have not been conducted, the study addresses a gap in literature. The following three assumptions also influenced the study. First, this study was undertaken in the belief that most school administrators would be interested in reflecting on their practices. Second, because Kenya and Canada are at different stages in terms of normalization of equity and inclusive education practices, the implicit assumption was that by making conscious connections between equitable leadership knowledge and the regulative, normative and cognitive pillars underlying institutional structure, the study's results could offer an alternative explanation of equitable leadership knowledge and information on the systems that give meaning to individual practices. Third, it was assumed that the results of this study would encourage school principals to envision new ways of understanding, participating in, and restructuring their practices, relationships, and values in order to deliver education's intended benefits to all students. The study is also significant because it provided school principals with an opportunity to gain insights into equitable leadership practice through analysis and reflection on their practice. Finally, the study provided school leaders with an opportunity to contribute meaningful information that may be used in re-conceptualizing equitable leadership knowledge and equity strategies in education.

This study was confined to a small group size (11 participants: six from Kenya and five from Canada). Because of the sample size, the results add to the understanding of how school administrators make sense of equitable leadership, how they connect equitable leadership to institutional obligations, and the importance of institutional pillars to equitable leadership knowledge within a contextual and bounded educational setting.

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study by outlining key issues related to equity and inclusive education in Kenya and Canada, including disparities in access and outcomes for individuals who are not part of the dominant group. This section briefly outlines the role of equitable leadership in eliminating disparities of access and outcomes and challenges associated with knowledge concepts. This chapter also provides an overview of the tools used in conducting the study, problem statement purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, and scope of the investigation. Thereafter, the chapter presents the study's conceptual framework, outlining how the framework incorporates institutional theory and critical constructivism in order to illuminate institutional factors that influence equitable leadership knowledge. The chapter concludes by outlining the organization of the thesis.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature that informed the study. This includes a review of existing research related to the topic of equitable leadership and its theoretical underpinnings. The chapter adopts a comparative approach and identifies some of the underlying principles and assumptions related to the regulative, normative and cognitive elements that underlie educational institutions and equitable leadership knowledge and practice in Kenya and Canada. Chapter 2 also explores how knowledge is institutionalized. This link between elements that underlie educational institutions and equitable leadership discursive practices underscores the importance of the study.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology and explains the rationale for choosing constructivist grounded theory, within a qualitative approach. The use of interviews as a data collection tool and the choice of research methods are discussed.

Finally, the chapter explains data analysis steps, including the incorporation of the processes of constant comparison as recommended in grounded theory approaches.

Chapter 4 presents the research findings. The chapter uses a thematic approach to present and compare study findings from Kenya and Canada. The chapter starts by presenting how equitable leadership was conceptualized and exploring the ideas that informed equitable leadership knowledge. A theme that resonates throughout the chapter is the close relationship between educational leadership knowledge base, institutional pillars, and equitable leadership knowledge. These connections are further illuminated in steps that the participants took to connect equitable leadership to institutional obligations. The chapter concludes by exploring the possibility that some practices ascribed to equitable leadership can contribute to the maintenance of unequal social relationships.

Chapter 5 uses institutional theory to discuss and analyze aspects of equitable leadership knowledge that were emphasized or deemphasized based on (a) constitutive and regulative rules, (b) assumptions that they were widely shared, and (c) participant constructions of contextual educational imperatives. Chapter 5 also presents a process theory that emerged out of retrospective examination of equitable knowledge events and explores the implications of the findings related to research, policy, and practice. The chapter concludes by providing recommendations for practice, theory, and research. These recommendations are related to school administrator training and mentoring, support for new administrators, adoption of an engaged critical inquiry stance, and further research to validate the theory.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review of the literature adopts a comparative approach between Kenya and Canada, where availability of relevant literature permits. In an effort to identify some of the underlying principles and assumptions encompassing the ideas related to educational institutions, this literature review draws on diverse scholarship on institutional theory. The literature also explores the regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive institutional pillars that underlie educational institutions and how individuals make sense of both institutions and knowledge imperatives. Next, the literature review focuses on constructions of educational leadership and equitable leadership knowledge. This section first examines select leadership theoretical paradigms in order to provide a theoretical grounding of knowledge regimes that equitable leadership draws upon. Attention is then turned to conceptions of equitable leadership. The literature review ends with an exploration of policies and frameworks that anchor equity and inclusive education and those that give meaning to equitable leadership knowledge constructs and practice.

Institutional Theory and Educational Institutions

Institutions represent a broad range of social, cultural, and legal entities that are prevalent in society. Yet, there is “no single and universally agreed definition of the word *institution*” (Scott, 2001, p. 48). A review of literature confirms the varying conceptions. For example, scholars and practitioners have at various times described institutions as resilient social structures which rely on taken-for-granted ideas to provide stability and meaning (Bjorck, 2004). Institutions are also understood as social constructions produced through meaningful interaction (Phillips, Lawrence, & Hardy, 2004) and as a “complex of positions, roles, norms, and values lodged in particular types of social structures ...

reproducing individuals, and sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment” (Turner, 1997, p. 6). According to Cohen and Orbech (1990), institutions represent permanently organized systems for patterns of accepted behaviour and actions to satisfy a societal need. Harre (1979) also posits that institutions are “an interlocking double-structure of persons-as-role-holders or office-bearers and the like, and of social practices involving both expressive and practical aims and outcomes” (p. 98). These ideas equate institutions to social structures that reproduce themselves and those that represent enduring features of social life. The varying conceptions of institutions invariably result in “different views of the nature of social reality and social order” (Scott, 2013, p. 56). More so, these varying institutional conceptions represent textual relations from which individuals make sense of equity and inclusive education obligations and goals.

Institutional theory considers the processes by which institutional structures, including constitutive schemas, norms, and routines reproduce themselves and/or represent enduring features of social life. Institutional theory also encompasses a broad range of theorizing about the role of broader cultural norms in influencing behaviour within institutions (Burch, 2007; Scott, 2013). Institutions and institutional theory have received increasing attention in recent years from “scholars that work in academic fields that contribute to educational research and policy analysis” (Meyer & Rowan, 2007, p. 1). According to Scott (2008a, 2013), various academic fields, such as sociology, political science, economics, organizational studies, and anthropology have approached institutional theory in different ways. For example, sociological conceptions of institutions focus on shared rules and typifications that identify categories of social actors and their appropriate activities or relationships (Barley & Talbott, as cited in Scott, 2013).

Economics approaches embrace orthodoxy in an attempt to account for the existence of organizations and institutions, whereas, rational-choice economic models and historical views of institutions dominate in the political science field (Scott, 2013).

Richard W. Scott's (2013) writings on institutions and organizations, including his seminal text *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities* are fundamental to the understanding of institutional theory presented in this literature review and throughout this body of work. In addition to acknowledging the multiplex nature of institutional reality, Scott's work is important to the present endeavour because he not only traces the historical roots of institutional theory, but also outlines the diversity of meanings attributed to the term "institution." Scott also sketches out a typology of regulative, normative, and cognitive institutional pillars, referred to as elements, which underlie institutional structure. These institutional pillars are differentiated based on their basis of compliance, foundations of legitimacy, and mechanisms for diffusion. For instance, the basis of compliance for each pillar depends on the extent to which individuals obey and conform because "their behaviour is subject to scrutiny from external parties...the rules unambiguously specify the required conduct...third parties have been granted authority to apply the rules" (Scott, 2013, p. 60). The foundations of legitimacy are related to the extent to which rule precision, delegation and obligations provide individuals with a "rationale for claiming legitimacy, whether by virtue of being legally sanctioned, morally authorized, or culturally supported" (Scott, 2008a, p. 51). The mechanisms for diffusion relate to the extent to which coercive, normative, and mimetic institutional forces influence individual actions based on the understanding that embedded institutional obligations are legitimate, sanctioned, and enforceable (Scott,

2013). Arguably therefore, cognitive, normative, and regulative institutional pillars contribute to equitable leadership meaning-making based on individual understanding that their actions are subject to external scrutiny, rules, and sanctioning.

Institutions impose restrictions and authorize actions by defining legal, moral, and cultural-cognitive boundaries and by distinguishing between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (Scott, 2013) in ways that influence educational leadership practices. These boundaries are evident in the elements that underlie institutional structure. For instance, since regulative elements are legally sanctioned, they represent legally enforced aspects of educational leadership knowledge and practice that are outlined in institutional policies, procedures, and legislative Acts. Equally, normative elements are seen as morally governed. They represent social knowledge obligations embedded in procedures and practices, including job descriptions, codes of conduct, and behaviour guidelines.

Finally, cultural-cognitive elements are deemed as comprehensible, recognizable, and culturally supported. They therefore represent taken-for granted knowledge and are understood as implicit and explicit knowledge expectations (Scott, 2013) for educational leaders. Hanson (2001) also argues that the cognitive pillar shapes the filter through which individual educational leaders view institutional reality and how they interpret the educational world. Linking the cultural-cognitive pillar to other disciplinary perspectives, Baba, Blomberg, LaBond, and Adams (2013) posit that the pillar “incorporates cognitive and interpretive anthropology and practice theory within the framework of new institutional sociology” (p. 75). Such an integration is important for understanding how individuals make sense of institutional happenings.

Within the educational field, earlier scholarship using institutional theory was

conducted by organizational sociologists interested in worldwide patterns, and were presented as generalized case studies of broader organizational and societal phenomena (see Burch, 2007). Views of educational institutions as social institutions that influence individual actions and equitable leadership knowledge concepts can be extrapolated from these studies as well. For example, a primary argument within this scholarship is that practices of educational institutions rest on organizing concepts related to social life, which are produced and reproduced (Phillips et al., 2004) based on each institutions' educative missions (Owens & Valesky, 2011) and "educational values" (Zucker, 1983, p. 5). Furthermore, Meyer and Rowan (2007) note that recent application of institutional theory in education is dominated by studies that examine the interaction of educational policies with classroom practices and school practices as well as influences on educational leadership practices and educational change processes. Continuing, the authors argue that these studies provide invaluable insights into educational institutions and confirm that school practices and policies reflect the rules and structures in wider society (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, 2007).

Similarly, Astor, Guerra, and Acker (2010) note that recent studies using institutional theory have presented educational institutions as "complex human organizations" that bring together unique groups within a common environment (p. 70). From these studies, the authors are unanimous that institutional structures influence educational practices, mission and values (Astor et al., 2010; Meyer & Rowan, 1977, 2007). The institutional structures also "foster learning, personal growth, and development of all participants" (Owens & Valesky, 2011, p. 13) but in ways intended to ensure stability and continuity. This process of ensuring stability and continuity is guided

by institutional sensemaking processes, by years of organizing institutions (Miller, 2012; Scott, 2001, 2004, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c) and by taken-for-granted ideas that are manifested as rules, norms, policies, and sanctioned knowledge.

Limited studies exist that focus on equitable leadership from an institutional theory perspective. However, institutional influence on educational practice can be gleaned from the following studies. Burch's (2007) case study of district reading and mathematics reform, for instance, which considered how governance of public schooling increase the utility of institutional perspectives show that institutional theory offers educational researchers important insights for understanding educational policy and research as well as "valuable leverage for understanding developments in education" (p. 93). Ramberg's (2014) exploratory study on how neo-institutional theory may be applied as an analytical framework to investigate the relationships between teachers' perceptions on their professional change confirm its usefulness for understanding institutionalized teacher practices within institutional governing mechanisms that are embedded in regulative rules, norms, and cultural-cognitive beliefs. More importantly, Ramberg (2014) argues that regulative elements in neoliberal policies have influenced teachers' perceptions of their classroom practices as well as normative values and cultural scripts that guide their practices. According to Hanson (2001),

Expectations, regulations, information flows, norms, myths, values, laws, and so forth impacting on schools tend to develop structuration. ...That is, the interaction between organizations becomes patterned through such means as information sharing, contractual relationships, formal and informal agreements, and mutual awareness of governance procedures. (p. 647)

Hansel (2007) also uses Scott's regulative, normative, and cognitive pillars, presented as new institutional theory, to analyse patterns of institutional constraints and supports that emerge when an urban elementary school is conceived and created in a high-stakes accountability environment. The results of Hansel's study confirm the usefulness of using an institutional framework to analyze educational policy problems and show that policies must consider an array of institutional actors than simply the schools. From these studies, "institutional impact on the regulations, norms, values, cognitions, and subcultures in a policy community cannot be overstated" (Hansel, 2007, p. 156).

Results from Armstrong and Mitchell's (2017) study that examined how two black female Canadian principals negotiated their professional identity in professional contexts show that administrative practice as well as professional identities are "produced, interwoven, and underwritten by powerful social and political scripts that perpetuate dominant hegemonies" (p. 12). Continuing, the authors argue that existing normative expectations can force individuals to adhere to practices that are marked with surveillance, discipline, and exclusion when they attempt to create equitable environments in their schools. In addition, Armstrong's (2010) qualitative study that examined the socialization structures and processes that impacted the transition from teaching to administration indicate that coercive institutional sensemaking processes, such as socialization, force individuals to comply with normative expectations and negatively impact institutional goals of creating equitable schools. Armstrong also argues that despite the understanding that socialization practices serve to reinforce the differences between organizational roles and maintain existing power structures, they remain unquestioned because they are normalized within the daily rituals of schooling.

Taken together, these studies allude to the influence of normative institutional elements in how individuals are socialized into and how they construct leadership practices. Similarly, they confirm the viability and need for an institutional lens to understand various aspects of education. The use of institutional theory expands equitable leadership discourse by unravelling other knowledge assumptions that influence educational leadership. The use of institutional theory also allows for an examination of “the larger context of educational practices...and educational setting as a complex system of inter-related aspects” (Capper & Green, 2010, p. 64), and contributes to a better understanding of the institutional foundations of individual construction of equitable leadership knowledge and practice. In particular, institutional pillars call up somewhat different views on the nature of reality; influence organizing concepts through “rules, norms, and cultural cognitive-beliefs” and “produce, reproduce, and change” individual behaviours (Scott, 2013, p. 57), which make them central to understanding institutional influences on equitable leadership knowledge and practice.

The use of institutional theory in educational research can unravel educational practices and explains why individuals make certain choices and whose interests are served by particular choices (Meyer & Rowan, 2007). Institutional theory can also illuminate different educational realities, such as those that are linked to knowledge rules, expectations and constitutive schema. For instance, if the elements that underlie institutional structure—normative, regulative, and cultural-cognitive—are deemed to represent knowledge truths, they invariably dictate and structure the processes that individuals use to transform their equitable leadership knowledge and ideas into action.

Institutionalization, Sensemaking, and Cognition

Knowledge institutionalization revolves around processes where knowledge and ideas are “produced, repeated, and come to evoke stable, similar meanings in self and others” (Scott, 2013, p. 18). In their seminal text *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Berger and Luckmann (1966) explain institutionalization as a dynamic, reciprocal process that help individuals make sense of organizational occurrences. Building on this definition, Meyer and Rowan (1977) explain that institutionalization involves the process through which socially accepted conventions become socially accepted in social thought and action and supported by law and/or public opinion. At the core of institutionalization are knowledge realities that are constructed by and arise in part from the social of patterns of interaction and meaning. These concepts around institutionalization revolve around the transmission of shared knowledge and beliefs to individuals who did not play a role in their construction. Subsequently, institutionally shared beliefs are presented as “this is how things are done” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 59). Institutionally shared knowledge and beliefs can therefore influence equitable leadership knowledge, prevailing social realities, and institutional perspectives on how to address issues of equity and inclusion in education.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) outline three processes—externalization, objectification, and internalization—through which knowledge institutionalization occurs. According to Berger and Luckmann, externalization denotes a process where social order as a human construct produced through social interaction, results in symbolic structures whose meaning come to be shared by other participants. The process of constructing common institutional meanings therefore produces and is produced through

existing social orders. Knowledge objectification occurs when meanings previously produced in social interaction confront individuals as “facticity outside of himself”, as something “out there”, and as a reality experienced in common with others (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 61). Interestingly, symbols previously produced when constructing common institutional meanings are treated as external objective phenomenon (Scott, 2013). Finally, Berger and Luckmann posit that during knowledge internalization the objectified world of what is considered as knowledge facts are “retrojected into consciousness in the course of socialization” (1966, p. 61). Knowledge institutionalization processes, as outlined by Berger and Luckmann, impact equitable leadership in three ways. First, equitable leadership must be understood from the perspective of school administrators’ interactions and institutional contexts. Second, equitable leadership produce and is produced by knowledge institutionalization processes. Third, institutionalization processes inform how school administrators connect equitable leadership knowledge to lived realities within educational institutions.

Expanding on Berger and Luckmann’s (1966) processes of knowledge institutionalization, Scott (2013) contends that underlying these processes are assumptions concerning the nature of social reality and the type of rationality associated with one of the three institutional pillars. Elaborating, Scott (2013) claims that through institutionalization, objectified beliefs and assumptions concerning the nature of knowledge become embedded in routines, forms and documents, and artifacts “in accordance with our mental categories...and the two [social and individual] become self-reinforcing” (p. 149). In his view, institutionalization promotes knowledge schemas which play a key role in how individuals frame problems, decisions, who is included, and

who is excluded. Institutionalization also promote constitutive schemas that transmit and legitimate various ideologies by providing normative, regulative, and cognitive templates through which individuals craft their lived realities and make sense of institutional happenings (Scott, 2013). Providing another perspective, Rottmann (2011) observes that knowledge institutionalization processes “account for the impact of the environment on the social self, but also the impact of interacting social selves on the environment... no social or historical context can be understood apart from the collection of individuals whose interactions produce the social world of which they are a part” (p. 22). From the insights of Scott (2013), Berger and Luckmann (1966), and Rottmann (2011), knowledge institutionalization is tied to increasing knowledge objectification and shared beliefs that are both abstract and general. For equitable leadership knowledge and practice, what is considered as objective knowledge is based on assumptions that the ideas are legitimate, have been replicated by other actors, and/or become “broadly accepted or habituated in interactions within and between organizations” (Scott, 2013, p. 148). Through knowledge institutionalization therefore, common institutional meanings, as sedimented knowledge are transmitted in a simplified, decontextualized way (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 70).

Institutionalization as increasing objectification of knowledge represents ideological ideas intended to shape behaviours (Scott, 2013) in educational institutions. For example, by virtue of the fact that educational institutions play a role in defining equity and inclusive education reality means that prevailing notions of equitable leadership are attached to existing relations of power. Fundamentally, prevailing ideologies are transmitted when groups and individuals exercise knowledge power in the process of defining how issues are understood, valid knowledge, and the means of

resolving social problems. Although framed around bullying constructs, Walton (2011) also contends that social problems, “are deemed in particular ways as problems by people in positions of power who generate and disseminate legitimized (i.e. scientific) knowledge” (p. 132). Thus, whatever constitutes or is understood as legitimate equitable leadership knowledge or equity and inclusive education problems are attached to “power interests” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 123) and are “constructed to serve the interests of one or another contesting power” (Scott, 2013, p. 150) because as Foucault (1980) posits, “it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power” (p. 52). Furthermore, presupposing that the power interests associated with education are grounded in and framed in ideas that are assumed to be universally applicable, by extension these ideas represent ideological beliefs about the nature of equitable leadership realities. In essence, equitable leadership knowledge constructs can represent ideological positions when they promote claims that they represent objective knowledge truths with universal applicability and/or principled beliefs related to education, equity, and inclusion by virtue of being grounded in human rights laws, UN declarations, legislative Acts, and policies.

Confirming some of these ideas on institutionalization, Wiseman’s (2007) exploratory study on institutionalization processes and mechanisms for embedding knowledge at the organization level show that knowledge institutionalization involves

Intuiting, interpreting, integrating, habitualizing, consensus building, collective validation and acceptance and objectification of knowledge. ...Once knowledge is institutionalized, it can be found in the various repositories of the organizational memory which have been found to play a role in controlling and determining what knowledge is retained. (pp. 1130-1131)

Notably, institutionalization processes contribute to meaning making within the institution and are embedded in collectively defined relationships that determine dominant cognitive frames, models, schemas, and belief systems. Institutionalization processes also contribute to sensemaking by helping individuals to understand how things are done based on established guidelines, knowledge, and rules. Therefore, it is understandable that arising out of institutionalized meaning making processes are standardized typifications which allow people to quickly understand a situation by associating it with a known object or experience (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). In the case of equitable leadership, knowledge institutionalization processes can lead to the interpretation of sedimented knowledge and the promotion of certain ideological positions as social facts because the ideas are habituated and understood to provide similar meaning for everyone in their social world (Scott, 2013) and/or are believed to have universal applicability (Meyer & Rowan, 2007). At the same time equitable leadership knowledge typifications can be associated with other knowledge clusters and prevailing ideologies that inform and are informed by ideas related to educational administration, teaching, learning, human rights, and equity and inclusive education policies, among others.

Sensemaking and cognition involve the use of knowledge frameworks or mental processes which include beliefs, schema, and assumptions to understand, construct, and comprehend situations (Weick, 1995; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Within institutions, sensemaking processes involve the generation and interpretation of cues from the environment in order makes sense of what has occurred (Weick, 1995; Weick, et al., 2005). As such, sensemaking represents a primary site where meanings materialize

(Mills, 2003; Weick, 1995) retrospectively. Primarily, it unfolds as a sequence in which people in the social context engaged with other actors in ongoing circumstances from which they extract cues and make plausible sense about knowledge and practice requirements (Weick et al., 2005). Similarly, Ganon-Shilon and Schechter (2016) posit that sensemaking occurs when individuals construct meaning from present stimuli, mediated by prior knowledge, experiences, beliefs, and values that are embedded in the social context within which they work. Other perspectives indicate that sensemaking occurs through institutional processes that contribute to knowledge objectification, internalization, and externalization (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Scott, 2013) and through collective validation, acceptance, and objectification of knowledge (Wiseman, 2007). For example, results of Rigby's (2015) study with first year principals that used sensemaking theory to analyze how these principals understood their roles demonstrate that through a variety of messages and connections with other institutional actors, new principals were able to associate specific ideas about instructional leadership and evaluation practices to institutional role expectations. Therefore, irrespective of how sensemaking occurs, it is embedded in cognitive dimensions of institutional adaptive strategies designed to help individuals make sense of organizational realities through an "ongoing, instrumental, subtle, swift, social, and easily taken for granted" institutional process (Weick et al., 2005, p. 409).

Weick's (1995) insights on sensemaking helps to unpack how individuals make sense of equitable leadership knowledge within educational institutions. Weick stresses that sensemaking revolves around a sequential three-step cognitive process: (a) an event, which stands out from the flow of everyday inputs and/or a retrospective viewing of an

event; (b) formulation of an explanation or interpretation of the event; and (c) explanation to promote others toward understanding and action based on individual interpretation.

Later adaptations in Weick et al. (2005) outline the following:

Sensemaking involves the retrospective development of plausible images that rationalize what people are doing. Viewed as a significant process of organizing, sensemaking unfolds as a sequence in which people concerned with identity in the social context of other actors engage ongoing circumstances from which they extract cues and make plausible sense retrospectively, while enacting more or less order into those ongoing circumstances. (p. 409)

The major difference in these explanations is that in the first iteration, Weick (1995) stresses the autonomy of individuals and the looseness of the social relations that link individuals in institutions, whereas in the latter, Weick et al. (2005) implicate norms and values related to social relations in sensemaking. As a result, individual practices, including those related to equitable leadership, are enacted “just as much from the subtle, the small, the relational, the oral, the particular, and the momentary ... [as] from the conspicuous, the large, the substantive, the written, the general, and the sustained” (Weick et al., 2005, p.410) processes of sensemaking in educational institutions.

Knowledge beliefs, schema, and assumptions play a powerful role in knowledge institutionalization processes (Scott, 2013) since they represent shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social realities and those that create the frames through which individuals make sense of institutional happenings. At a personal level, cognition as a mental process of knowing or that which is known through perception, reasoning, or intuition is intimately linked to knowledge typifications and knowledge assumptions. For

example, knowledge related to equity, inclusion, and equitable leadership as shared conceptions are only possible when its meanings arise in interaction and are maintained as they are employed to make sense of ongoing stream of happenings. In particular, when the resulting equitable leadership cognitive rules, roles, and activities acquire cultural significance, they are seen to represent “the way we do these things” and assume taken-for-granted status (Scott, 2001, p. 57). In other words, equitable leadership knowledge arises within rationalized systems at the institutional level. Therefore, individual articulation of and cognition related to its rules, roles, and activities “reflect means-ends relationships” that are oriented to the pursuit of specific knowledge goals (Scott, 2004, p. 5). The shared conceptions are also geared towards standardization of knowledge and practice norms and “informed and constrained by the ways in which knowledge is constructed and codified” (Scott, 2013, p. 83).

Ideas about cognitive processes are found in studies that focus on how individuals understand and acquire knowledge (Tomic & Kingma, 1996). In these studies, cognitive frameworks are represented as internal interpretive processes that assume taken-for-granted status when other actions are not conceivable. Specifically, the cognitive processes that result in transformation of knowledge into taken-for-granted rules, norms, and routines involve creating, adopting, and adapting explicit procedures out of prevailing discourses (Scott, 2004, 2013). Kakiyama and Sorenson’s (2002) study exploring knowledge emergence also confirms that cognitive processes that enable individuals to make sense of knowledge operate within a set system of “institutional arrangements for organizational knowledge and its [knowledge] creation in an everyday

level across organizational boundaries” (p. 13). Lam (2000) confirms that personal and institutional knowledge bases are shaped by broader institutional contexts.

So far, the outline of institutional and organizational theories reveals the following regarding a possible relationship between educational leadership knowledge and elements that underlie educational institutions: First, knowledge is acquired, maintained, and disseminated within a structure that is guided by repetitive patterns of action by educational actors. This structure is manifested as rules, norms, regulations, policies, and procedures (see Howells, 2006). Second, individuals make sense of ambiguous events as an everyday occurrence and/or when organizational circumstances and experiences are turned into written and spoken texts. In such cases, sensemaking and institutionalization occur at multiple levels and involves common frames of reference and shared local definitions (Scott, 2013). Third, educational institutions rely on varying institutional pillars to provide stability and meaning (Turner, 1997). Fourth, schools as a subset of educational institutions mirror “complex human organizations” (Astor et al., 2010, p. 70) made up of an amalgam of legally sanctioned, morally governed, and culturally supported laws, legislations, policies, rules positions, roles, norms, and values. Next, I turn to examine regulative pillars and educational practices.

Regulative Pillars and Educational Practices

Education is a highly regulated field in both Kenya and Canada, with school leaders expected to operate within pre-set regulatory systems. These regulatory controls are enacted at the national or federal levels of government and at the local levels through legislation and practice, with a very high degree of control exercised over budgets, school board or Board of Management (BOM) governance practices, day-to-day activities, and

leadership decisions (Bourgeois, n.d.). According to Scott (2013), regulatory controls are part of regulative elements that underlie institutional structure. Within education, regulatory controls encompass “the capacity to establish rules, inspect conformity to them, and as necessary, manipulate sanctions—rewards or punishments—in an attempt to influence future behaviour” (Scott, 2013, p. 59). Similarly, because the regulatory controls include laws and represent distinct ideologies related to human rights and schooling, individual and institutional compliance is achieved through coercion because the “rule of law is clear, monitored, and enforced” (Hirsh, 1997).

The constitution, as a regulatory control operates at the national/federal level and sets out the basic principles of a democratic government as well as the overarching regulatory framework in both Kenya and Canada. The constitution also provides the fundamental rules and principles that govern a country, including many of the institutions and branches of government. For example, in both jurisdictions, laws exist that protect individual human rights and fundamental freedoms, including those pertaining to basic education (see Canadian Constitution Act 1867, 1982; Constitution of Kenya 2010). However, under the terms of the Canadian Constitution Act, 1867, and the subsequent Constitution Act, 1982, each Provincial Legislature is charged with making laws in relation to education. Under these arrangements, formal education is under provincial jurisdiction whereas the delivery rests at the local level with school boards (Wotherspoon, 2014). Conversely, under the constitution of Kenya, education is a national responsibility housed under the Ministry of Education.

Within both constitutional dispensations, basic education is understood as the first 12 years of schooling, that is elementary or primary and secondary education, which

translates into 8 years of primary/elementary education and 4 years of secondary education in Kenya and Canada (Onderi & Makori, 2013; Wotherspoon, 2014).

Subsequent regulatory controls related to education emanating from both constitutions explicitly identify roles, responsibilities, and the expectations of different stakeholders at the local and national levels in Kenya and Canada. These regulatory controls span nearly all areas of education, including finance and governance, teaching and teachers' organization, curricula and service delivery, assessment of performance outcomes, and public accountability in education (Wotherspoon, 2014). Furthermore, through constitutional arrangements and other legislative Acts, "several agencies and levels of government are involved in the organization and delivery of education" (Wotherspoon, 2014, p. 92) in both Kenya and Canada. These actors invariably contribute to regulatory regimes by establishing their own regulations, policies, and guidelines.

The Education Act, as a regulatory text, controls the delivery of primary, elementary, and secondary schooling in both Kenya and Canada through formalized rule and value systems. For instance, the Act reflects the high priority society places on formal education through the establishment of roles and responsibilities of various educational stakeholders, guidance on educational governance issues, and administrative entities that carry out Ministry of Education policy directives (Bourgeois, n.d.). In Ontario, for example, the Education Act and its regulations set out the duties and responsibilities of the Minister of Education, school boards, school board supervisory officers, principals, teachers, parents, and students (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1990). In Kenya, the Basic Education Act Cap 211 of 1968 revised 1970, 1980, and 2013 is the

main legal document governing education in Kenya. According to the Kenya Ministry of Education (2013), the Act

[G]ives effect to Article 53 of the Constitution and other enabling provisions; promotes and regulates free and compulsory basic education; provides for accreditation, registration, governance and management of institutions of basic education; and provides for the establishment of the National Education Board, the Education Standards and Quality Assurance Commission, and the County Education Board. (p. 220)

Therefore, the Education Act is central to the advancement of education with direct and indirect control of the Ministry of Education. The Act also reaffirms individual rights to free basic education which is enshrined in the constitutions of Kenya and Canada.

Regulatory controls extend to school administration and the principalship. For instance, the Ontario Education Act R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298, s.11(1) states, “the principal of a school, subject to the authority of the appropriate supervisory officer, is in charge of (a) the instruction and the discipline of pupils in the school; and (b) the organization and management of the school” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1990). While less clear because the principalship is a delegated function, the following legislative acts perform similar regulatory functions in Kenya: (a) the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) Act, whose primary mandate is to regulate the teaching profession, monitor performance and conduct; and determine remuneration of teachers; (b) the Basic Education Act Cap 211 of 1968 revised 1970, 1980 and 2013 focuses on roles and responsibilities related “governance and management of institutions of basic education” (p. 220); and (c) the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) Act Cap 225A of 1980, which regulates

the management and conduct of public examinations and certification of schools. Both the TSC and KNEC also delegate responsibilities related to teacher supervision and exam management to school principals.

The role of regulatory tools in structuring the principalship is documented in research studies. Hudson's (2007) qualitative analysis of official policy documents, legislation and official statements concerning education in Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, and Finland), England, and Scotland indicate that regulatory controls, such as those outlined above influence quality control, standards, monitoring, and evaluation of education at national and local levels. Goldwyn's (2008) mixed methods study examining educational leaders' knowledge base identifies a positive relationship between the school leaders' domain knowledge and student outcomes. Further, the author explains that because legislative acts outline roles and responsibilities related to school management and administration, curricula, and teacher education, as regulatory controls, they contribute to how the principalship is enacted. In other words, the knowledge that school principals use is recalibrated based on constitutional, legislative, and policy contexts.

Professional bodies contribute to regulatory regimes by establishing codes of conduct, roles, responsibilities, and knowledge requirements. According to Christie (2010), the setting of professional standards or knowledge for principals form part of the broader drive for accountability and operates as a regulative framework for accountability. In both jurisdictions, specific professional bodies—such as the Ontario College of Teachers, Ontario Principals' Council (OPC), the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO), L'Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO), Teachers Service Commission of Kenya, Kenya School

Heads Association, and Kenya Education Management Institute—not only regulate professional practices, but also identify knowledge requirements and conduct professional development activities for its members. More so, professional associations and regulatory bodies enforce and determine institutionally acceptable professional codes of conduct as well as “credentials and claims to authority” (Scott, 2008c, p. 233). As a regulatory mechanism, professional associations influence institutional processes for transforming ideas into action, how individuals understand educational obligations, and the ways of achieving equity and inclusive education mandates.

Regulatory controls, through a network of laws, policies, and regulations represent interrelated patterns of relationships that cover a wide range of educational stakeholders and ensure accountability. Embedded within regulatory controls related to equity and inclusive education, ideas such as “quality controls, standardized testing, and evaluation systems” and the responsibilities for “carrying out these controls” (Hudson, 2007, p. 277) are used to hold individuals accountable. In essence these ideas represent an effective method for ensuring that school administrators’ actions and inactions related to equity and inclusion are understood within an institutional regulatory framework.

Normative Institutional Elements and Educational Leadership

Educational institutions rely on shared norms and values among group members to operate optimally (Lunenburg, 2011). As elements that represent normative pillars that underlie educational institutions, educational norms emphasize prescriptive, obligatory, and evaluative dimensions of social life (Scott, 2013). Scott (2013) further contends that,

Values are the conceptions of the desirable or the preferred together with the construction of standards to which existing structures or behaviours can be

compared and assessed. *Norms* specify how things should be done; they define legitimate means to pursue valued ends. (p. 64)

Norms and values, as stabilizing beliefs, give rise to roles or conceptions of appropriate goals and activities for individuals. They also lead to the establishment of normative expectations of individuals' behaviour, with "conformity or violations of norms typically involving a large measure of self-evaluation: heightened remorse or effects on self-respect" (Scott, 2013, p. 66). Thus, the normative pillar underscores how educational norms constrain and/or empower individual actions through "intentional, self-conscious actions and competing interests; power and conflict; and the dynamics of change, social action, and policy" (Hirsh, 1997, p. 1713). Consequently, although normative conceptions are socially constructed, they confer rights, responsibilities, privileges, and mandates that empower individuals (Scott, 2013) and inform interpretations of institutional issues and problems. They are also perceived to be congruent with preferences and interests of other institutional actors.

With respect to educational leadership, educational norms and values can be equated to the general knowledge, criteria, standards, or principles that guide individual behaviour. For example, within the west, the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders identify "integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, learning, and continuous improvement" (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015, p. 10) as critical to educational leadership. Ultimately, norms and values articulated in the professional standards for educational leaders, set, outline, and determine what is understood as general knowledge and conceptualized as behaviours administrators need to exhibit to be considered effective school leaders.

Leo and Wickenberg's (2013) study of professional norms in school leadership shows that professional norms in education are set when principals and teachers experience expectations from each other, from students, and institutional texts such as policy documents. These norms embody interests, preferences and expectations that individuals place on each other that they assume can only be realized by means of collective action. In other words, because normative conceptions stress the importance of the "logic of appropriateness" and correct action (Scott, 2013, p. 65), individual [school administrators'] action on the basis of norms and values are based on either anticipated consequences or consensus in "85%–90%" of the cases (Begley, 2001, p. 3).

Rosenblatt's (2011) study on the role of institutional mechanisms and moderating functions of social network structures and cultural values within the context of multinational organizations suggests that normative institutional processes promote certain types of behaviour or restrict others. When extrapolated to educational settings, these findings suggest that normative institutional elements, as institutional mechanism for ensuring continuity, can mediate and authorize individual actions. Such connections are evident where norms and values are predicated on dominant narratives that have worked in the past, and where routines are followed simply because they are taken-for-granted and/or rooted in norms and values (Begley, 2001).

Results of an exploratory study of administrative responses to changing school environments conducted by Spillane et al. (2011) also indicate that routines in changing institutional environments offer a particular way of influencing interactions, norms, values, and knowledge needed by leaders. The authors argue that,

Changes in school norms are forged, at least in part, through transforming

organizational routines, an aspect of the formal structure that in turn influences practice. ... *If* organizational routines are implemented and institutionalized, the values pressed by school leaders through these routines... become normative over time through the ongoing performance of the routines. (p. 608)

Evidently, normative elements and perhaps equitable leadership norms and values are based on institutional rules, obligations, and assumptions regarding knowledge needed to implement equity and inclusion in education. Furthermore, these norms and values are socially constructed and developed primarily in order to ensure compliance, to provide institutional and social identity, and to reduce the need for regulative controls (Scott, 2013). In the case of equitable leadership, these norms can be conceptualized as knowledge truths that are encouraged, enforced, and rooted in institutional structure.

Educational Leadership Knowledge: General Concepts

Many theoretical paradigms, such as those from the fields of psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology, political science, and organizational theory influence educational leadership (Gordon, 2010) in Kenya and Canada. For instance, literature from organizational studies show that educational leadership is shaped by institutional and theoretical worldviews, although it is unclear how the various texts authorize practice or how individual actions are constituted (Miller, 2012). According to Astley (1985), the body of knowledge that constitutes administrative science is mediated by theoretical preconceptions. Similarly, while limited research exist in Africa and Kenya, the same cross-cutting concepts are evident. Within African leadership literature, one also notices a shift in terminology, with the substitution of “leadership” with “management” in the literature (see Ngesu & Ndege, 2010; Sang, 2010).

Literature from the West indicate that scholars and practitioners have sought to connect leadership activities and organization over many decades (Razik & Swanson, 2001). In this quest, the behaviours, functional orientations, and formal positions or roles have emerged as cross-cutting concepts in studies conducted mainly in the West. For instance, Burrell and Morgan (1979) contend that theories of organizations are located in one or more of the four paradigms that classify existing sociological theories: “functionalist, interpretive, radical humanist, and radical structuralist” (p. 22). In other words, a systematic explanation of social phenomenon and shared beliefs about organizational life exist; visible aspects of administrative work represent enactments of taken-for-granted routines (Wagenaar, 2004); and individuals make sense of and enact institutional life by invoking taken-for-granted practices and understandings (Dougherty, 2004). These concepts in organizational life related to knowledge not only involve intricate webs of causes, effects, and processes, but also include theoretical and institutional worldviews.

Broad conceptions of knowledge requirements for educational leaders and/or school principals can also be gleaned from works on the origins of education as a field of study, from scholarship that examine leadership preparation programs, and from studies on principals’ perceptions of administrative knowledge. Starting with the cluster of studies on the origins of education as a field of study, the literature shows that the reason for delineating a special body of knowledge, including those of educational administrators, is to “prove to those outside the profession that there exists a specialized body of information and skills, the mastery of which confers special status to the practitioners” (Scheurich, 1995, pp. 17-18). Knowledge distinctions are also based on

claims that individual and group practices are rooted in explicit knowledge and are subsequently sanctioned through the adoption of professional norms (Scott, 2008c). As such, they standardize professions and the training needed by professional groups.

The knowledge for the principalship can be loosely divided into tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. Distinguishing between these two types of knowledge, tacit knowledge refers to knowledge grounded in experience, assumed ways of reasoning that individuals use to achieve a particular goal in daily practice (St. Germaine & Quinn, 2005), or knowledge “stored in the mind in a causal way” (Wassink, Slegers, & Imants, 2003, p. 528). Explicit knowledge refers to knowledge acquired in leadership preparation or professional development programs or knowledge gained through structured studies (Goldring, Huff, Spillane, & Barnes, 2009; Wassink et al., 2003). Tacit and explicit knowledge are constructed discursively and influence each other in ways that link knowledge to practice (Goldring et al., 2009). As cognitive conceptions, they provide direction and can represent institutional expectations tied to knowledge for practice.

In the cluster of literature on explicit knowledge promoted through educational leadership preparation programs in North America, seven subject domains comprise the knowledge base for the principalship: (a) societal and cultural influences on education; (b) teaching and learning processes and school improvement; (c) organizational theory; (d) methodologies of organizational studies and policy analysis; (e) leadership and management processes and functions; (f) policy studies and politics of education; and (g) moral and ethical dimensions of schooling (Goldwyn, 2008; National Policy Board for Educational Administration of 1989 as cited in Donmoyer, Imber, & Scheurich, 1995). The Ontario Leadership Framework also identifies the following five domains as critical

in educational administration: (a) setting directions, (b) building relationships and developing people, (c) developing the organization, (d) leading the instructional program, and (e) securing accountability (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2012). Similarly, the South African Department of Education's policy framework of 2005 in its Standard for School Leadership (SASSL) identifies six knowledge areas for the principalship: (a) leading and managing the learning school; (b) shaping the direction and development of the school; (c) assuring quality and securing accountability; (d) developing and empowering self and others; (e) managing the school as an organization; and (f) working with and for the community (as cited in Moloi, 2007). Ideologically, the identification of specific knowledge objects provides a template from which individuals understand professional expectations and knowledge that matters. Furthermore, their identification alludes to claims of their universal applicability (Scott, 2013) for managing teaching and learning and ensuring achievement of organizational goals, but not necessarily the achievement of equity and inclusion in education.

In the literature cluster on tacit knowledge of school administrators, scholars identify specific classifications of knowledge requirements and cognitive frames. For example, Wassink et al.'s (2003) study on tacit knowledge of school leaders reveal four cognitive clusters: (a) the structural frame which focuses on educational policy; (b) political frame which is primarily concerned with the allocation of scarce resources; (c) symbolic frame which is primarily concerned school culture; and (d) human resource frame which is primarily concerned with individuals and decision-making. Nestor-Baker and Hoy (2001) also identify three dominant knowledge clusters that emerge out of a total of 469 school superintendents' tacit knowledge examples: interpersonal

(influencing, controlling, and managing others); intrapersonal (self-knowledge and self-regulation); and organizational (student achievement and instruction). The existence of these cognitive frames and knowledge requirements for the principalship is indicative of organizing systems that influence knowledge constructs. They also confirm the existence of diverse and competing concepts that influence equitable leadership.

Research focusing on principals' perceptions, such as Hess and Kelly's (2007) study on leadership preparation programs, identify managing educational results and achievements, personnel, technology, external relationships, norms and values, classroom instruction, and school culture as key to effective school leadership. Athanasoula-Reppa and Lazaridou's (2008) study with principals in Greece and Cyprus reveal that "knowledge of laws and regulations, knowledge from graduate studies in educational administration, knowledge resulting from experience, and explicit knowledge about leadership" (p. 78) are essential for the principalship. While informing understanding of the principalship, these two studies emphasize different knowledge requirements (for the principalship). Similarly, the interrelationships between individual practice, knowledge constructs, and institutional imperatives can be gleaned from Zembylas and Iasonos's (2010) study on the relationship between leadership styles and approaches to social justice leadership. Results from their study indicate that leadership constructs were influenced by explicit and tacit knowledge about equity and social justice. Moreover, these results indicate that prior understandings of knowledge, professional expectations, norms, and institutional parameters for action influenced how individuals interpreted social justice. Accordingly, school administrators' leadership knowledge depended on subjective interpretation of institutional imperatives, especially those relevant to their

practice or those acquired through professional socialization (Zembylas & Iasonos, 2010). Finally, results from McGlynn's (2008) study of principals' knowledge and perceptions in relation to their leadership styles indicates that the ability to integrate individual understanding with knowledge of leadership styles and theories influenced school administrators' responses to school issues. Collectively, these studies suggest that the process that individuals used to arrive at educational decisions involved contemplating various leadership approaches, knowledge of the issue, and professional expectations and norms as outlined in their school's administrator handbook.

As debates continue regarding knowledge for the principalship, these cognitive clusters confirm the different ways that knowledge is understood. In many ways, these attempts to delineate or understand how the knowledge base of school administrators is constructed only fuels the debate about the required knowledge of school administrators. For example, Painter (2006) indicates that the constantly changing and increasing demands on school administrators is partly responsible for the persistent difficulty in articulating the knowledge base. Painter also observes that,

The expectations for principal knowledge are multifaceted. One expectation is technical skill. Principals are expected to know how to create a master schedule for a secondary school; administer discipline policies; manage budgets; and observe, coach, and evaluate classroom teaching...professional knowledge is more than technical skill; it includes problem solving. (2006, p. 3)

Perhaps then, the difficulties in articulating the knowledge base of school administrators is related to the ontological origins of knowledge, ideas that matter in systems of power, and the ongoing shifts in educational institutions. Thus, while knowledge, skills, and

dispositions might appear diverse, they still relate to symbolic, structural, and cognitive frames that underlie education (Wassink et al., 2003). In the unfolding knowledge drama, one imagines discursive practices built on technical rationality, but with no coherent theme. At best, these ideas represent a shopping list from which to select the knowledge and institutional imperatives of import for equitable leadership.

Equitable Leadership in Education

Equity and social justice are perennial educational issues, with equitable and inclusive education deemed fundamental to delivering high-quality education (Ryan, 2010; UNESCO, 2008). The importance that equitable leadership plays in the delivery of educational ends can be inferred from literature that explores the preparation of school principals, meanings and practices related to equity, inclusion, and equitable leadership in schools. For instance, a literature review undertaken by Capper, Theoharis, and Sebastian (2006) show that social justice and equity are dominant discourses in the preparation of educational leaders. The literature review also identified 11 studies that offered suggestions for preparing school leaders in order to ensure individuals develop the knowledge, skill, and dispositions to address equity issues. Another study conducted by Bush and Jackson (2002) of 11 educational leadership centres in seven countries noted the importance of equity, inclusion, and diversity in leadership preparation programs. Within this literature cluster, equitable leadership is understood as practices that address issues that arise out of “changing social and historical contexts” of education (Jean-Marie et al., 2009, p. 12) and as educational practices that address “systematic organizational practices and policies...endemic to schools and administrator practice” that perpetuate injustice (Marshall & Oliva, 2010, p. 7).

Terminologies such as equity and social justice elicit diverse strategies based on individual understandings of their theoretical underpinnings and intent (Dantley & Tillman, 2010). These terminologies also coexist with a range of ideas about social justice, equality, fairness, and human rights (McInerney, 2004) and are often used interchangeably (Chege, 2006) which contributes to ongoing discursive confusion. Similarly, unraveling the subtle differences between social justice leadership and equitable leadership can be problematic because their conceptual underpinnings often go unnoticed. In a literature review, such an ambiguity can either be problematic or can broaden the conceptual scope of equitable leadership. However, ideas of equitable leadership as being about equity principles that allow for “leadership responsibilities to be shared with a wider community than individualistic and positional perspectives” (Ryan 2010, p. 2) and being about practices that address systematic practices that perpetuate injustice (Marshall & Oliva, 2010) provides a conceptual starting point. This description contains a number of ideas which I will unpack and elaborate in this chapter. Thus, while this conceptual starting point does not necessarily resolve inherent predicaments, those being, practices of equity, social justice, and equitable leadership as well as terminologies such as equity and social justice are contested and value laden (Dantley & Tillman, 2010), it ensures that the “insights of our predecessors provide the context for current efforts and the platform on which we necessarily craft our contributions” (Scott, 2013, p. 55).

Equity rests on a value system that incorporates principles of social justice and concepts such as fairness and equality. In relating equity to the social justice paradigm, the terminology becomes infused with the ideas and insights of justice as a central

concept in social and political structures (Murphy, 1999) whose interpretations seek to establish universal principles revolving around (re)distribution of rights, opportunities, and resources that arise from social cooperation (Rawls, 1971). Rawls's (1971) theory of justice, for example, positions justice as "the first virtue of social institutions" and relates justice and equity to the way in which major social institutions distribute rights, opportunities, and resources that arise from social cooperation (p. 3) assuming inherent inequities do not exist. The underlying intent of Rawls's theory of justice, also referred to as distributive justice, is the notion that each person should be accorded an equal share of opportunity according to individual needs, rights, efforts, societal contribution, and merit. Rawls however does not resolve who determines who is owed what, what constitutes equal rights or merit. Based on the controversies of who determines who is owed what, three ideas can be inferred from Rawls's theory of distributive justice: (a) justice is promoted through structural reform of the society; (b) justice is a compromise between persons of equal power who would enforce their will on each other if they could; and (c) justice is a collective responsibility between equally empowered individuals. Accordingly, equity concepts within this paradigm relates to the intent to reinforce "social and altruistic" (Rawls, 1971, p. 281) ideals based on equal power, which makes this justice concept problematic in situations where existing social arrangements disadvantage some while privileging others or in unequal power relationships. Therefore, one must interrogate implications associated with Rawls's theory. For differently empowered groups, associational aspects of (in)justice, understood as recognition of difference, diversity, and equity in participation (Lister, 2008; Young, 1990) are important lenses for probing educational practices that perpetuate access and outcome

differentials for students based on unequal power relationships.

The concept of equality is based on the assumption that “free and rational persons concerned to further their interests would accept an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms of their association” (Rawls, 1971, p. 11). Built around this initial position of equality are agreements, laws, and regulations that specify the desired nature of social relations. In the case of equity and inclusive education, these intentions are informed by the constitution, the Education Act, and other forms of social control. These social agreements or contracts relate equality concepts to societal intent to ensure *equal rights* to education; *equal opportunities* to benefit from the process of schooling; and school *responsibility* to ensure equal access to educational resources and comparable outcomes. This position assumes that ideas such as equal access and outcomes, are based on rational choice and applicable to all. It does not concern itself with disadvantages and advantages of social circumstances or family background. The other way to understand this concept is from the perspective of a one-size fits-all educational opportunity, which, according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2012) is not adequate for individuals who are excluded in current social arrangements or occupy a position of disadvantage. Therefore, in the pursuit of equity and inclusion in education, school principals and institutional stakeholders not only assign basic rights and duties, but also rely on a common institutional framework to ensure that schooling aims, wants, and norms result in equitable outcomes for students disadvantaged by existing social relations (Oyugi, 2013).

In *fairness* discourse, the central claim is based on the idea that “the principles of justice are agreed to in an initial position that is fair” or the result of a “fair agreement or

bargain” (Rawls, 1971, p. 12). At the onset, fairness discourse does not depart from existing ruling relations. Specifically, fairness constructs begin with a status quo based on assumptions regarding acceptable social relations and assumptions that everyone has the same interpretation of what is fair, and agrees with the mechanisms for addressing unfair situations. Relatable elements of the principle of fairness in education are linked to fairness in institutional norms related to learning, assessment, and what counts as success and failure. Therefore, although equity as fairness in education revolves around social and altruistic norms where individuals in positions of power or schools take actions that are deemed as fair, their actions should be oriented to addressing unfair circumstances that disadvantage individuals and/or which negatively impact individual educational potential and outcomes (Oyugi, 2013). Similarly, since status quo assumptions are tricky for individuals who are disadvantaged or who want to realize different life chances through education, equity as fairness must include actions for ensuring that “personal or socio-economic circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin, and family background are not obstacles to educational success” (OECD, 2012, p. 15).

These concepts associated with equity show that these terminologies incorporate what are believed to be shared conceptions related to social and altruistic ideals based on equal power relations, rationality, and fair social arrangements. Similarly, although these varying concepts, that is social justice, equality, and fairness elicit different views on social reality, equity is still grounded on ideas that some individuals and groups are disadvantaged or advantaged by existing social relations.

Turning to equity and equitable leadership, various understandings exist. These understandings can be gleaned from studies that deconstruct existing leadership

perspectives and studies that focus on preparation of educational leaders. The studies are clustered around themes such as equity in schools, theoretical underpinnings of both social justice and equity, equity oriented instructional leadership, and equity and inclusion in education (see Theoharis & Brooks, 2012; UNESCO, 2008). These studies also take a critical stance. A critical stance refers to moral practices where educational leaders challenge educational structures “built upon the so-called neutrality of objective reality” (Bogotch, 2002, p. 3) or those that “privilege some and disadvantage others” (Furman & Shields, 2005, p. 123). Encapsulated in these equitable leadership understandings are individual and systemic intentionality that are focused on role expectations, (in)equity practices, and educational outcomes.

Within this literature cluster, scholars argue that educational equity is about “raising the achievement of all students while narrowing the gaps between the highest and lowest-performing students” (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 46) and about correcting “shortcomings in the regulations, rules, and laws that would otherwise be open to abuse by the majority, wealthy, influential, and powerful members of society” (Chege, 2006, p. 177). Rigby and Tredway’s (2015) study of urban school principals indicate leadership actions grounded in an equity framework can ensure equitable opportunities and outcomes for all students, regardless of race or family income. These results also show that successful leaders were explicit about the equity issue and the processes for resolving the issue and engaged in a shared reflection about equity and inequity with the school community. Galloway and Ishimaru’s (2017) study involving educational researchers, practitioners, and community leaders show that equitable leadership requires individuals to “address the systemic, structural, and sociopolitical nature of disparities between

dominant and nondominant students and families...(and) pervasive colorblindness and unexamined power and privilege that reinforce and sustain inequities.” (p. 25-26).

Educational equity therefore is centered on countering systemic and structural barriers that maintain disparities, including perspectives that reflect a deficit orientation.

Educational equity is also about practices that ensure equity, fairness in access, and equitable outcomes for individuals who are underserved and underrepresented in current schooling arrangements. While different interpretations about equity exist, educational equity is key to ensuring education delivers high quality schooling, promotes social inclusion, and reduces disadvantages for students who are underserved and underrepresented. In such instances, educational equity is about prioritizing and decreasing disparities in student outcomes by addressing systemic and structural roots of inequity in schools (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2017). Therefore, it follows that equitable leadership knowledge is couched within the context of educational accountability. The concepts also revolve around access and outcomes for minority students, students who come from low-income families, students with disabilities, and other marginalized groups (Theoharis & Brooks, 2012) in Kenya and Canada.

Explicit ideas about equitable leadership knowledge were gleaned from a number of studies. These studies, emphasized knowledge strategies that individuals need or use to ensure just social arrangements, equality of outcomes, equitable treatment of individuals, and on leadership practices that can mitigate inequity in educational institutions (Ross & Berger, 2009). Theoharis and Brooks (2012), for instance, argue that principals require content knowledge to be effective at meeting the learning needs of students from marginalized backgrounds. As an equitable leadership knowledge concept, content

knowledge encompasses understanding of the principles and practices related to effective teaching and learning, which ultimately enable principals to make informed decisions on matters relating to equity and inclusive education. Effective management and management knowledge were also identified as elements of equitable leadership knowledge. Management concepts focused primarily on “resource allocation, including material, financial, and human resources; planning, monitoring and evaluation systems; and fostering organizational leadership” (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2017, p. 16) that enable schools to achieve their equity goals.

Ideas about equitable leadership were also garnered from institutional texts. In the Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, equity in education is defined as a “condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, p. ii). Whereas, inclusive education is,

Based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, p. ii)

These definitions not only informed equitable leadership knowledge but also co-existed with ideas that equitable leadership involved transforming structures, systems, and practices that reinforce disparities (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2017). Within these constructs, equitable leadership meant going “beyond the question of equality” (Chege, 2006, p. 177); and problematizing who benefits, who is included, and who is excluded in educational arrangements in order to address conditions and situations that give rise to

inequity in educational settings. Additionally, equitable leadership was understood as practices that included: inclusive development of an equity vision; creating and sustaining an equitable culture; culturally responsive teaching; and equitably allocating resources (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014); modeling equitable practices (Brown, 2004; Furman & Shields, 2005); influencing policy (Dantley & Tillman, 2010); and influencing beliefs, values, and attitudes of the school community (Murakami, 2009).

In studies that focus on specific aspects of equity and inclusion, scholars identify knowledge with the type of issue addressed. For example, according to Davis and Armstrong (2012), “knowledge of the dynamics of racism, their own racial location, and how it intersects with other areas of difference, can provide school leaders with dispositions and tools to analyze the attitudes, procedures, and practices in their schools” (p. 31). Rougoor’s (2012) study underscored the importance of school principals being knowledgeable about disability issues. In addition, she maintains that principals must be able to recognize barriers and use preventative strategies toward physical disability concerns in order to create inclusive school environments. Underlying these equitable leadership knowledge and practices are ideas that,

Every student has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or other factors. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 8)

Thus, when individuals have certain equitable leadership knowledge, such as those related to teaching, marginalizing issues, and when they are aware of relevant approaches

and strategies, then they are better able to address issues of access, inclusion, and equitable outcomes for all students.

Other conceptualizations of equitable leadership knowledge included ideas such as inclusive and shared leadership (Ryan, 2012). These terminologies were used interchangeably, which complicates attempts to explicate their conceptual roots. Starting with inclusive leadership, Ryan (2006) describes them as practices “advocating for inclusion, educating participants, developing critical consciousness, nurturing dialogue, emphasizing student learning and classroom practice, adopting inclusive decision- and policymaking strategies, and incorporating whole school approaches” (p. 9). Ryan’s (2006) concept of inclusive leadership is founded on inclusive participation and relates to

The process of leadership that is inclusive; the ends of the process are also geared toward inclusion. Inclusive leadership aims to achieve inclusion in all aspects of schooling and beyond the school to the local and global community, and it does so through a process that is itself inclusive. (pp. 17-18)

In practical terms, inclusive education is related to strategies that encourage stakeholders such as parents, community, and the pupils to participate in regulating school principals and education in general (Hudson, 2007). In terms of equitable leadership, inclusive educational practices such as parental engagement and community involvement can help minimize the impact of challenges arising from aspects of students’ family backgrounds and situations, especially poverty (Leithwood, Harris, & Strauss, 2010). Additionally, since exclusion and isolation of students can result in behaviour problems in the classroom and decreased interest in school (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009), inclusive leadership and practices in schools can enhance student access and outcomes.

Inclusive leadership can also mean the acceptance of the strengths inherent in different identities and statuses within the school community. Therefore, schools improve student outcomes by enacting practices where everyone within the school community is included and everyone works together towards the schools' equity and inclusive education goals.

Shared leadership is a widely promoted concept in educational leadership discourse that takes many forms. The concept of shared leadership also overlaps substantially with ideas related to distributed, collaborative, democratic, and participatory leadership. The concept is invariably understood as sharing leadership, distributing tasks, and so forth. Conger and Pearce (2003) define shared leadership as a “dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both” (p. 1). According to Hughes and Pickeral (2013), shared leadership occurs when teachers, school staff, parents, students, and the principal collaborate to solve problems. Relating shared leadership to school climate, they argue that shared leadership represents

a shift from the formal leader to a shared leadership model resulting in shared power and decision making. Instead of a single individual leading to success, other individuals, who are partners or group members, are invited to share the responsibility for leadership. (Hughes & Pickeral, 2013, p. 2)

Assumedly, shared leadership involves shared purpose, social support, and meaningful participation. In terms of equitable leadership, some scholars argue that shared leadership has the potential of advancing the inclusion of individuals in the cultural, institutional, and economic lives of schools (Ryan, 2010). Lindahl (2008) contends that shared leadership can lead to greater support and participation of teachers, students and other

stakeholders. Shared leadership therefore can represent a powerful leadership strategy for improving student learning and outcomes. Shared leadership can also lead to a shared purpose and shared responsibilities within schools.

The links between shared leadership and equitable leadership are found in various institutional texts. These institutional texts provide explicit descriptions that link equitable leadership to shared leadership. For example, in the equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, shared leadership is identified as one of three goals for achieving equity and inclusive education in Ontario schools (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). In the Strategy, the Ontario Ministry of Education (2009) positions achieving equity and establishing equitable and inclusive education in schools as a shared responsibility. This responsibility requires the commitment and collaboration from all education partners.

In school and board-level equity and inclusive education policies in Canada, shared leadership takes the form of stakeholder collaboration in implementing institutional practices and behaviours that cultivate equity and inclusive education and those that improve student achievement and close achievement gaps (Peel District School Board, 2010). For example, Policy #54 affirms the Board's commitment to informed and shared leadership to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps. Policy #54 also outlines "institutional practices and behaviours that cultivate equity and inclusive education"; some of these practices include the promotion of "collaborative approach to all dimensions of equity and inclusive education" (Peel District School Board, 2010, pp. 2-3). Theoretically, these institutional texts provide an overarching framework by conveying that "all partners in education—including community partners, parents, and students—are responsible for preparing students to live in a diverse society"

(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 19). As a matter of practice, these texts convey that shared leadership is critical to equity and inclusion in education. The texts also allude to the fact that shared leadership occurs when school administrators influence “organizational members and other stakeholders towards the identification and achievement of the organization’s vision and goals...is supportive and facilitative rather than persuasive, manipulative, or coercive” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 20). Shared leadership therefore occurs when teachers, staff, parents, students and principals collaborate to solve equity and inclusive education problems.

Shared leadership concepts are also found within literature that focuses on teacher leadership and educational administration. Because teachers are primarily responsible for providing quality instruction, their ability to assume leadership positions is critical for addressing student access and outcomes gaps. For example, Çetin and Keser’s (2015) study focusing on teacher responsibilities within the context of shared leadership outline the following factors as key ingredients of shared leadership:

The existence of a set of values that will support the practice of teacher leadership...a vision that has a guidance role in shaping and implementing education policies...a systematic network of communication, in which teachers and families play an active role...an administration that includes local dynamics to decision processes ... and a transparent structure that ensures the maximum usage of resources in actualizing education targets. (p. 1033)

As shared leadership shifts the focus away from the school principal as the one with all the answers, the number of people within the school increase who can be engaged in ensuring equitable student outcomes. In addition, teacher engagement can lead to

equitable outcomes as they work collaboratively, mentor, and learn from each other. This argument echoes Leithwood and Riehl's (2003) assertion that "teacher leaders can help other teachers to embrace goals, to understand the changes that are needed to strengthen teaching and learning, and to work towards improvement" (p. 3) or equitable outcomes.

In sum, equitable leadership knowledge as shared and inclusive leadership is about institutionally sanctioned practices or practice-based assumptions. Underlying these assumptions are beliefs that all educational stakeholders have a role to play in addressing conditions in education that lead to inequity and problematizing ruling relations that reinforce wider social hierarchies and injustices (Ryan, 2007; Smith, 1990). With these assumptions, shared and inclusive leadership are promoted as the panacea for achieving equity and inclusion in education. However, the literature also points out that it is inevitable that shared and inclusive leadership, as an equitable leadership expectation to involve all stakeholders presents challenges and remains "hierarchical" (Lindahl, 2008, p. 306). Duignan and Bezzina (2006) posit that sharing leadership with others, requires a rethinking of what constitutes a workable philosophy and framework for leadership in schools. The challenges to shared leadership also persist because educational institutions have "failed to establish a model of shared leadership that can be diffused across a wide range of schools" (Lindahl, 2008, p. 298).

The principles of equity, equality, and social justice that underlie equitable leadership are about norms and practices in schools and society that impact social, political, economic, and educational (in)equities (Dantley & Tillman, 2010). Therefore, irrespective of one's understanding, and although the literature reviewed is predominantly from the West, equitable leadership in education is vital for ensuring that

all learners have the opportunity to achieve equitable educational outcomes. Furthermore, ideas associated with equitable leadership as shared and inclusive leadership can substantially contribute to access and equity for marginalized groups. Primarily, these concepts revolve around “interaction between two or more members in a group that involves the structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perception and expectations of the members” (Bass, as cited in Lindahl, 2008, p. 301). Their use towards equity ends can help in the restructuring of lived realities that perpetuate unequal social relations. Similarly, shared and inclusive leadership concepts, as dynamic and interactive processes in which group members interact to order to achieve predetermined goals (Çetin & Keser, 2015) can substantially contribute to equity and inclusive education ends. Since shared and inclusive leadership concepts are about sharing power and leadership responsibilities with a wider community instead of being concentrated on individuals (Ryan, 2010), they can open democratic space by enabling differently empowered groups in education to contribute to equity ends. Subsequently, shared and inclusive leadership normalizes school practices that encourages partnerships with families and students as well as collaboration with communities (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2017) that lead to the realization of equity and inclusive educational ends.

Institutional Texts and Equitable Leadership Knowledge

Institutional texts, such as policy documents and legislation contain sufficient information to infer meanings. Conceived as both text and discourse, Ball (1993) contends that policies represent textual relations which are

Encoded in complex ways (via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations) and decoded in complex ways (via actors'

interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and context). (p. 11)

Elaborating, Ball indicates that this conception of policy focuses on the “meanings or processual knowledge and discursive practices, which include prevailing knowledge regimes and individual experiences that inform policy positions” (1993, p. 14). Thus, equity and inclusive education texts, as discursive practices represent forms of social interaction and power exercised through a production of truth and knowledge.

Policies and legislations as textual representations of social life contain explicit and direct institutional commitments, values, and means of achieving objectives, and individuals can infer meanings and institutional obligations from these documents themselves without recourse to the authors (Owusu, 2014). Institutional policies, legislations, and laws are also nested within complex layers of social norms and political contexts (Walton, 2010) as well as within other laws and regulations that address similar issues. As a result, even where no specific policy, law, or legislation exists, such as in the case of equitable leadership knowledge in education, meanings can be inferred from existing social norms that are contained in intersecting legislative and policy texts at the international, national, and local levels. In other words, institutional texts contain information that express meaning, vision, intent, governing principles, and the end results adopted and/or to be adopted to enhance equity and inclusion in education that informs equitable leadership knowledge and practice.

At the international level, various human rights instruments enhance equity, set the standards, and provide meaning and relevance to equity and inclusion in education. At the core of these texts is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 which

recognizes education as a fundamental human right (UN General Assembly, 1948);

Article 26(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) stipulates,

Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.

Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

In the preamble, the General Assembly also proposed the adoption of the UDHR as a common standard of achievement and for the UDHR to be promoted through teaching, education and other national and international “progressive” measures.

Equally important are the provisions of other UN conventions, declarations and recommendations that set standards as well as give meaning and coherence to equity and inclusive education (UNESCO, 2009). For example, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) reinforces a child’s right to free and compulsory primary schooling without any type of discrimination; the UN Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) reiterates individual rights of access to education and to equality of education. In addition, the Convention acknowledges the role of education in ensuring equality of opportunity for all groups and links education directly to human rights. The Convention also contains explicit details, including an understanding of discrimination as any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference based on race, color, sex, language, religion or political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition, or birth. Similarly, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) recognizes the right of inclusive education to all. Finally, the Delhi Declaration (1993) provides further international support for inclusive education by advocating for the

elimination of “disparities of access to basic education arising from gender, age, income, family, cultural, ethnic and linguistic differences, and geographic remoteness”

(UNESCO, 2009, pp. 29-32). These conventions and declarations are relevant to equitable leadership in Kenya and Canada since a majority of them have been ratified.

At the international level, institutions such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) contribute to meanings associated with equity and inclusive education at the international and local levels. In UNESCO’s (2010) *Reaching the Marginalized: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010*, the institution frames equity through the lens of individual rights to education and to realize full potential and aspirations through education. In addition, the following important meanings can be inferred from UNESCO’s (2009) guidelines on inclusive education. First, inclusive education is a “process that involves the transformation of schools and other centres of learning to cater for all children” (UNESCO, 2009, p. 4). Second, inclusive education encompasses various educational activities that enable students to achieve desired outcomes from their education experiences. Third, educational outcomes or “learning achievement” refers to the “acquisition of the values, attitudes, knowledge and skills required to meet the challenges of contemporary societies” (UNESCO, 2009, p. 8).

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), a United Nations program also provides insight into equity and inclusion in education. UNICEF’s (2010) policy implementation guide, developed to support the integration of equity and inclusion issues in the education sector, provides the following explicit information on what is meant by equity and inclusion as well as the values and means of achieving equity and inclusion:

Equity requires securing all children's rights to education, and their rights within and through education to realize their potential and aspirations. It also requires implementing and institutionalizing arrangements that help ensure all children can achieve these aims. ...Inclusion requires responding to the diversity of needs among all learners, through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and reducing exclusion from and within education. It involves changes in content, approaches, structures, and strategies, driven by a common vision that covers all children. (p. 3)

These international covenants and declarations set out the central elements that are intended to ensure equity and inclusion in education in Kenya and Canada. For example, Section 93 of Canada's Constitution Act, 1867 gives the provinces the exclusive right to govern education, subject to the preservation of denominational education rights. The provinces, Ontario included, therefore assume responsibility for equity and inclusion in education. Article 53(b) of the constitution of Kenya also provides broad guidelines on equity and inclusion. These guidelines are implemented through the Basic Education Act.

A review of Canadian websites and institutional texts confirm that various policies and legislations have been enacted to ensure equity and inclusion in education across Canada in response to delegated authority contained in Section 93 of Canada's Constitution Act, 1867. The Ontario Education Act provides the constitutional basis for delivery of public education in Ontario and informs a number of institutional texts from the Ontario Ministry of Education that support equity and inclusive education. Under the Education Act (1990, c. 8, s. 29.1), the Ministry of Education requires school boards to develop and implement an Equity and Inclusive Education policy. Other texts include

Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009); Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, 2014); Policy/ Procedures Memorandum (PPM) 119 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, revised 2013); and The Comprehensive Action Plan for Accepting Schools (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). (See <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.html> for a complete list.)

In terms of explicit details about equity and inclusive education, it is noteworthy that the Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (the Strategy) includes a statement indicating that it promotes, although out of legal necessity, “fundamental human rights as described in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms” and falls “within the context of the Education Act” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 13). Under the Strategy, school boards and individual schools are required to incorporate the board's policy and review classroom strategies for integrating this policy. Excerpts such as “We [Ministry of Education] envision an inclusive education system in Ontario in which: all students, parents, and other members of the school community are welcomed and respected; every student is supported and inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 10) convey explicit meanings that are applicable to policy vision and educational outcomes at the school level.

Similarly, the Strategy contains sufficient details that help individuals to understand equity and inclusion in education. Tacitly, the Strategy supports school boards in the development of policies that address discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to achievement and well-being of specific groups of Ontario students. It also contributes to

sensemaking. For example, at the School board and school level, equity and inclusive education policies that promote respect for fundamental human rights, reflect expectations contained in the Strategy. A review of three school boards in the Greater Toronto Area reveal how the Strategy has been incorporated at the local level. In Peel District School Board's (2010) *Equity and Inclusive Education Policy—Policy #54*, a key goal is to achieve equity for students and staff by providing equity of access and opportunity as well as environments that are safe, nurturing, engaging, respectful and inclusive. In addition, Peel District School Board's Policy #54 states that it

Upholds the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Constitution Act, 1982 and confirmed in the Ontario Human Rights Code (the “Code”). The Board and its staff are also committed to the elimination of all types of discrimination as outlined in Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (the “Strategy”); and in the Ontario Ministry of Education's (the “Ministry”) Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2009), *Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools*. (Peel District School Board, 2010, p. 1).

Policy #54 confirmed Peel Board's commitment and informed equitable leadership ideas.

Toronto District School Board's (TDSB, 1999) Policy P.037: CUR Equity Foundation identifies equity of access as critical to the achievement of successful outcomes for all. TDSB further commits to fairness, equity and inclusion. TDSB defines equity as “providing each and every student with the conditions that support achievement and well-being. It is about supporting not only the students who are falling behind, but

raising the bar for all students” (see <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/AboutUs/Equity.aspx>). At the same time, under leadership for equity and inclusion, TDSB’s (2015) Integrated Equity Framework Action Plan signaled that the board was moving away from understanding of leadership as based in position to one focused on influence and shared expertise. These texts provided sufficient details to infer meaning, commitment, and connections to other documents that informed equity and inclusion in Ontario schools.

York Region Catholic District School Board’s (YRCDSB) Equity and Inclusive Education, Policy #613 adhered to the guiding principles outlined in the Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy. According to the board, “these guiding principles provide a foundation and framework to meet individual needs, identify and eliminate barriers, promote a sense of belonging, engage community members” (York Region Catholic District School Board, 2015, p. 1). YRCDSB also defines equity as “a condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences” (p. 5). YRCDSB Equity and Inclusive Education Policy #613, further describes equitable leadership roles of key stakeholders, including those of the school principal (YRCDSB, 2015).

A review of literature from the Kenyan context did not uncover specific equitable leadership and/or equity and inclusive education policies at the school level. However, other regulative elements that were rooted in international textual relations provided guidance to equitable leadership knowledge and practice, albeit from a western perspective. For example, article 53(b) of the Constitution stipulates that children have the right to a free and compulsory education and also prohibits schools from denying admission to students with disabilities in Kenya (Law Society of Kenya, 2010). This

constitutional focus on individual rights is linked to the values and principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights such as equality, non-discrimination, equity, and social justice (Wango, 2011). Other international covenants and declarations, some of which Kenya has ratified (see the UN Convention on the Right of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) were replicated in local contexts.

The Basic Education Act of 2013 (the Act) implements article 53(b) of the Constitution of Kenya by ensuring the provision of a free and compulsory education for all children in Kenya, including those with disabilities. Within the Act, the provision of basic education is guided by the following values and principles: (a) the right of every child to free and compulsory basic education; (b) equitable access to basic education and equal access to education or institutions; (c) elimination of gender discrimination, corporal punishment or any form of cruel and inhuman treatment or torture; and (d) non-discrimination of the marginalized, persons with disabilities, and those with special needs in education. The Act also identifies “accountability and democratic decision making within the institutions of basic education” as key values (see Ministry of Education, 2013, pp. 225-226). Specific section of the Act that inform equity and inclusion include Section 28(1) which outlines individual rights to free education. Undoubtedly, these values and principles informed equitable leadership knowledge and practice at the school level. In other words, institutional texts intertwined equity, inclusion, and equitable outcomes in ways that were intended to set standards and contribute to the broader educational objective of increasing student achievements and reducing student achievement gaps.

In matters of equity and inclusive education, although there were no institutional texts that focused specifically on equitable leadership at the school or at the Ministry of

Education level in Kenya, Chapter Six of the constitution of Kenya calls for objectivity and impartiality in decision making as well as accountability to the public for decisions and actions. These calls for accountability affect all state officers, including school principals and informed their ideas about equitable leadership. Mutisya (n.d.) also contends that Chapter Six of the Constitution influences “the way education managers run their educational institutions” (p. 3). Together, these institutional texts were key in supporting the principal’s efforts to facilitate equal access to all students within the school environment in Kenya. In particular, international institutional texts (conventions, declarations, and recommendations) outlined elements addressed in the constitution of Kenya, which informed equity and inclusive education legislations and laws.

In summary, this chapter on literature review examined equity and equitable leadership knowledge from an institutional perspective. As such, this literature review involved a review of quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method studies on institutional theory, administrative practice, educational leadership, and construction of individual and institutional realities in institutions. The studies were primarily descriptive and included both small-scale studies and larger randomized samples. These studies confirm that school administrators’ actions are constructed within an institutional framework that dictates how they construct their knowledge and practice. This relationship between knowledge and practices is an ongoing dialectic, with each “structuring and shaping” each other to ensure compliance with institutional expectations (Scott, 2008b, p. 430). Concurring, Watkins (2005) aptly reminds us that,

Human beings live out their daily lives and socially construct their reality through the negotiations, contestations and resistances of the rules and resources within

which their lives are entwined. Through this ongoing dialectic people influence and are influenced by the structures in which they find themselves. (p. 16)

Similarly, the alignment of local rules and regulations related to equity and inclusive education with international covenants, declarations, and recommendations serves as a scaffold for accountability, standardization, and reproduction of existing social arrangements. Thus, the knowledge, goals and strategies that drive equity and inclusion in education cannot be separated from the invisible ways that the social world is constructed. Neither can it be separated from the relational and ideological sedimentation that lie at the intersection of equity and inclusive education and the regulative, normative, and cognitive educational pillars. Even if the institutional dimensions of equitable leadership knowledge and practice were unclear, the principalship and equitable leadership practices are still bounded by institutional imperatives that regulate schools and individuals within schools. The next chapter outlines the methodology used in this study to understand the institutional dimensions of equitable leadership and practice.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of institutional factors on Kenyan and Canadian school principals' constructions of knowledge and practice related to equitable leadership. A secondary purpose of the study is to develop a theory on the processes that school principals use to link institutional imperatives to their constructions of knowledge and practice. This chapter on research methods discusses the study's methodology by presenting the research design and methods, site and participant selection, recruitment, and data collection and analysis procedures. The chapter concludes by outlining the study's limitations and the ethical implications and the strategies used to protect the rights of study participants.

Research Design and Methods

The study uses a constructivist grounded theory within a qualitative design. The use of constructivist grounded theory within a qualitative design is important because constructivism rejects claims of objectivity and asserts that realities are social constructions, which helped to disentangle "grounded theory from its positivist, objective roots and brings the researcher's roles and actions into view" (Charmaz, 2011, p. 365). Additional considerations also prompted the adoption of a qualitative research methodology and a grounded theory approach. Specifically, the choice of qualitative research was based on the principle that social life is inherently complex. By extension, given that issues of equity and inclusive education and equitable leadership knowledge ideas are "inextricably bound up in ongoing social action" (Dougherty, 2002, p. 849), the use of a qualitative method was helpful for uncovering connections between equitable leadership knowledge and institutional imperatives. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative approaches are useful for explaining a social phenomenon and understanding

why things are the way they are. Its use in this study was ideal for explaining the relationships between knowledge and institutional pillars and understanding how equitable leadership is sanctioned and enabled through ruling relations.

Researchers are expected to choose a research paradigm that is congruent with their beliefs about the nature of reality (Charmaz, 2011; Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006). In this regard, constructivist grounded theory presents an ontological and epistemological fit with my beliefs about the nature of reality, that is, the social construction of knowledge and truths. Here, constructivist grounded theory is understood as flexible analytic guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories that are grounded in the data themselves (Charmaz, 2011). In choosing a constructivist grounded theory approach, I have consciously located my research within the broader family of grounded theory methods (see Glaser & Straus, 1967). Through this approach, I aimed for interpretive understanding rather than theoretical generalizations (Charmaz, 2011) since “practice-based knowledge does not exist independently of social action, and its content does not necessarily mean the same thing to all involved” (Dougherty, 2004, p. 37). Similarly, because constructivist grounded theory adopts a “contrasting relativist approach that shifts its ontological and epistemological grounds” (Charmaz, 2011, p. 366), it is useful for illuminating the complex and contested nature of equitable leadership knowledge. The approach also helps to generate a better understanding of the institutional undertones of equitable leadership knowledge by positioning the researcher as author in the co-construction of experience, by incorporating multiple realities, and by remaining alert to variations and differences (Charmaz, 2011).

Constructivist grounded theory studies begin with an inductive logic, use emergent strategies, and rely on comparative inquiry (Charmaz, 2011). The studies also

do not assume that a certain structural element or condition operates in the theoretically proscribed manner (Dougherty, 2002). As a method of studying institutions, this approach is ideal for capturing the inherent complexity of social life and for conceptualizing organizational issues in terms of their interactions with the actual context of practice (Dougherty, 2002). Further, because of its explicitly analytical approach, grounded theory was deemed sufficient for capturing the processes for connecting institutional constructs with equitable leadership knowledge. It was also considered useful for teasing out, identifying, naming, and explicating “core themes that capture some of the underlying dynamics and patterns” (Dougherty, 2002, p. 849) in educational institutions. More importantly, constructivist grounded theory was useful for reframing the discussion on how equitable leadership knowledge and practice are constructed. Therefore, the choice of constructivist grounded theory approach was suitable for unravelling the ontological underpinnings of equitable leadership knowledge and the institutional pillars that mediate, sanction, and authorize equitable leadership practices.

Site and Participant Selection

The study sample comprised 11 individuals who held administrative positions in secondary schools. For the purpose of this study, school administrators or principals were defined as individuals in school leadership positions such as school principals and vice/deputy school principals. Out of the 11 participants, six participants were from Kisumu County, Kenya and five were from the Greater Toronto Area, Canada. Of the six participants from Kisumu County, four were school principals and two were deputy school principals. This group is further broken down into: two males from county mixed day secondary schools, one male from county boys’ boarding secondary school, one female from a County girls’ boarding school; and two females from county mixed day

secondary schools. Similarly, out of the five school principals from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) who participated in the study, one female was from the Catholic School Board, three males were from the public school board, and one female was from the public school board. Finally, although the study started with twelve participants, one participant, from a national school in Kisumu County later opted out of the study between the first and second interviews. Her data is not included. See Appendix B: Participant List, which summarizes participants by country, gender, and type of school.

Interviews with eleven participants for such a study provides rich data from which to conduct robust analysis. As Creswell (2012) contends,

It is typical in qualitative research to study a few individuals or a few cases. This is because the overall ability of the researcher to provide an in-depth picture diminishes with the addition of each new individual or site. One objective of qualitative research is to present the complexity of a site or of the information provided by individuals. (p. 207)

Furthermore, in order to develop in-depth exploration of the influence of institutional obligations on equitable leadership knowledge and practice, the study sample was restricted to school administrators because of their role in ensuring that education delivers its intended benefits to all students equally and in implementing educational policies and practices related to equity and inclusive education.

The study employed two sampling strategies. First, purposeful sampling was employed to select study location and participants in Kenya and Canada. In purposeful sampling, “the researcher intentionally selects people or sites who can best help us understand our phenomenon” (Creswell, 2012, p. 203). Second, maximal variation sampling strategy was used to select participants from various school types in Kisumu

County, Kenya and Ontario, Canada. The strategy was used to ensure that selected sites and key informants were representative of a wider school administrator group, to provide multiple perspectives and to build complexity into the research. Accordingly, maximal variation sampling is useful when researchers want to sample “cases or individuals that differ on some characteristic or trait” and is consistent with the characteristic of qualitative research because it allows the researcher to present multiple perspectives of individuals in order to represent the complexity of our world (Creswell, 2012, p. 204).

Through the use of these two sampling strategies, the study solicited participation of school administrators from girls’ and boys’ boarding schools, mixed boys’ and girls’ schools, and from day schools in Kisumu County, Kenya. Similarly, the study solicited participation of school administrators from both Catholic and Public school systems, in order to ensure that selected sites and participants were representative of the two dominant school boards that operate in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). By having representation from diverse schools in Kenya and Canada, the study was able to capture the perspectives of individuals within existing school systems. The use of these two sampling strategies is consistent with characteristic of qualitative research, where the intent is to present multiple perspectives of individuals (Creswell, 2012).

Recruitment

To begin the process of recruiting participants, I referred to Kisumu County and school district websites to compile a list of select secondary schools in the Kisumu County and GTA, Ontario including names and contact information of the school principals. I also asked my personal and professional contacts to distribute my contact information to colleagues who might be interested in participating in the study and to identify or recommend 10 to 20 individuals for the study from Kisumu County, Kenya

and GTA, Ontario.

From the list provided by my contacts and list of schools I generated from school district websites, I selected 20 secondary schools, 10 from each jurisdiction where one or both of the following conditions existed: (a) there was an existing contact with the school principal or with another person who had a contact with the school principal; and (b) the potential participants were located in close proximity to my workplace or residences in both jurisdictions in order to minimize travel time. Once potential sites and participants were identified, I contacted the 20 individuals via email and/or telephone and requested their participation as key informants. After the initial contact in August 2014, confirmation of willingness to participate in the study was obtained from all Kisumu County participants by September 2014 and from all Canadian participants by January 2015. Once study participants were identified, I sent an email to the individuals thanking them and confirming the appointment time and venue. I also called some participants, especially those from Kisumu County, in order to confirm participation and appointment time and venue. A total of 11 school administrators participated in the study. Six participants were from Kisumu County, Kenya and five participants were from GTA, Ontario. No personal relationships existed between study participants and myself.

Data Collection

For constructivist grounded theory studies, rich and sufficient data involves collecting data about processes, settings, and contexts, as well as detailed participants' views and actions (Charmaz, 2006). Such an approach to data collection illuminates assumptions that lie beneath the surface, incorporates multiple views, and allows for comparisons across and between the data (Holtsclader, 2007). Accordingly, two types of

data were collected; namely, interview data and document data. I had also planned to collect data through participant observation for purposes of data triangulation. However, I was unable to observe participants as they enacted equitable leadership due to participant unavailability and research constraints.

The first round of interview data was collected through 60-minute semi-structured, one-on-one interviews starting September 2014 for Kenya participants and in January 2015 for Canadian participants. These interviews took place at mutually agreed upon meeting points outside the school. The second interviews were conducted via Skype and telephone with participants from Kenya and Canada in order to clarify any issues that arose during the first interview. The second interview was also used to probe explicit steps that individuals used to connect their knowledge to institutional obligations, with probing questions based on responses during the first interview. Follow up was also conducted through emails, particularly with Canadian participants to clarify responses. (See Appendix A: Interview Questions.)

Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to understand the action of participants in their own words (Creswell, 2012) and to identify how the cognitive, normative, and regulative elements that underlie institutional structure influence equitable leadership knowledge and practice. Specifically, the use of semi-structured interviews enabled me to gather data about participants' understandings of institutional structures and equitable leadership knowledge, how they put equitable leadership knowledge into practice, and the processes they used to connect equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations. Additionally, because the research questions focused on the influences of institutional pillars on equitable leadership knowledge and practice, the

study was able to gather data about participants' working contexts and equitable leadership issues. Through the use of probing questions, I was able to gather additional information regarding how institutional constructs impacted individual knowledge and practice, and the manner in which individuals put their understandings of equitable leadership knowledge into practice. Interviews began with a general question regarding equitable leadership. Follow-up questions focused on equitable leadership knowledge and practice, with a focus on the ways that individuals connected their equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations related to the principalship. After the interviews, I sent emails to Canadian participants and Kisumu County participants, to thank them for participating in the study. I also provided a copy of the interview transcript for their review to ensure accuracy and to clarify information contained in the transcript.

Additional data were gathered through a review of public documents, such as UN conventions, policies, constitutions, Education Acts, leadership frameworks, and other texts pertinent to equity and inclusive education in Kenya and Canada. The documents were obtained from government, public, school websites, and professional associations, such as Ontario College of Teachers and the Teachers Service Commission, Kenya. These documents were scrutinized in order to explicate how they mediate, sanction, and authorize equitable leadership knowledge and practice.

Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of various steps, as outlined in grounded theory approaches. However, prior to data analysis, audio-tapes were transcribed verbatim and checked for accuracy. Interview transcripts were then analyzed manually. Analysis of the interview data consisted of three key steps recommended in grounded theory approaches.

These steps included open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding as an analytic process, is undertaken with an open mind (without preconceived ideas) in order to find, name, and conceptualize issues and underlying patterns for connections (Charmaz, 2003, 2006, 2011; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Axial coding is the process of relating codes (categories and concepts) to each other through inductive and deductive thinking (Charmaz, 2003, 2006, 2011; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Selective coding refers to a data analysis process of choosing one category to be the core category, and relating all other categories to that category (see Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978). These three data analysis steps incorporated the processes of constant comparison, which refers to a simultaneous and concurrent process of coding and analysis in grounded theory studies (Charmaz, 2006, 2011; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2010). Therefore, data was continually compared and contrasted at each level of analysis, with emergent concepts arising from the data used to guide subsequent data collection and analysis and helped to ensure that the substantive theory generated was “integrated, consistent, plausible, and close to the data” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 102). These data analysis steps are elaborated below.

The first step in the data analysis was open coding. During open coding, the intent is to identify and name concepts and their properties, and then form codes (see Charmaz, 2006; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; Glaser, 1978; Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2010), which I used to examine transcripts line by line, and word by word for categories, key concepts, and patterns of behaviour. Throughout open coding, I (re)read the transcripts separately for Kenyan and Canadian participants. I also used a constant comparison process in order to identify actors, their roles, as well as the means, reasons, and strategies for equity and

inclusion in education. During this step, themes and categories started emerging related to how equitable leadership was conceptualized among Kenyan and Canadian participants. Concepts such as equitable access, equitable outcomes, and shared and inclusive leadership emerged. Commonalities also started to emerge regarding the processes used to connect equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations and textual relations embedded in institutional pillars.

After re-reading the transcripts, I decided which code to assign knowledge concepts, practice concepts and processes. I also wrote theoretical memos. Theoretical memos refer to notes or short documents that one writes to oneself as one proceeds through data analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; Glaser, 1978; Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2010) and are based on the coding notes. Specifically, I wrote short notes regarding how some of the texts in the transcript related to literature and institutional texts that informed equity and inclusive education. I also made notes regarding how equitable leadership knowledge was understood within the context of educational norms, regulatory processes, and required knowledge for the principalship. These theoretical memos helped me to systematically compare data from Kenya and Canada and to construct knowledge abstractions from educational leadership ideas and patterns for connecting knowledge to institutional obligations. According to Charmaz (2006), abstractions from the data and literature allow researchers to identify the “specific and the general... seeing what is new in them—then exploring their links to larger issues or creating larger unrecognized issues in entirety” (p. 181).

A second step in data analysis, axial coding, took place after all the data had been thoroughly examined and initial open coding completed. Axial coding was used to relate,

define, and differentiate emerging concepts in Kenya and Canada and to relate participant knowledge to institutional obligations, especially those that were explicitly stated in equity and inclusive education policies, rules, laws, and professional expectations. This step also involved revising codes through progressive focusing by comparing texts in both Kenyan and Canadian data sets which were tagged by two or three codes. For example, shared and inclusive leadership in both jurisdictions were tagged in codes associated with professional norms, regulatory processes, and constitutive schemas in Kenya and Canada. Based on emerging codes, I reorganized the data and identified constitutive schema as the core category and related it to other codes. To be precise, constitutive schema as an emerging category for shared and inclusive leadership in Kenyan and Canadian contexts was related to professional knowledge norms and expectations, institutional pillars, and equity and inclusive education incidents, actions, interactions, contexts, and events derived from the data. Finally, all emerging categories were also related to the steps participants took to connect equitable leadership knowledge and practice to institutional obligations. These steps included gathering/identifying knowledge, establishing knowledge objects, and confirming knowledge.

Selective coding represented the third step in the data analysis. Selective coding was useful for reformulating the central category, equitable leadership knowledge institutionalization. To arrive at the central category, I filtered and reformulated existing codes in order to create new codes that were conceptual (see Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978) and expanded on the relationships between codes and concepts related to the process theory. For instance, substantive theory emerged as the central category and was related to codes that linked equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations

and processes for knowledge institutionalization. Similarly, these categories were refocused to show their relationship to institutional pillars and participants' explanations of actions, interactions, consequences, and context. The substantive theory was related to institutional mechanisms for ensuring compliance, mechanisms for diffusion, and the basis of knowledge legitimacy. Implicitly, selective coding was used to conceptualize how the substantive theory related to knowledge institutionalization processes (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Scott, 2013) and involved analyzing and linking codes in order to capture, synthesize, and understand main concepts.

In summary, data analysis steps included open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Data analysis also included a processes of constant comparison. Through outlined steps, codes and categories continually evolved to reflect emerging categories. Consistent with grounded theory analytic procedures, I used data to identify, develop, and construct a classification system or theory (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013). The use of constant comparison ensured that the central category was reflective of the meanings that participants attached to their experiences (see Charmaz, 2006, 2011; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013) and that the explanations related to the theory were relevant and applicable in both study jurisdictions. The theory was arrived at through a rigorous analysis of how core categories fit with new data and from the relationships between categories and codes.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with requirements for ethical research with human participants, as established by the Brock University Review Ethics Board (File # REB 14-012). The study was also conducted in a manner that protected

participants and was “sensitive to the inherent worth” of study participants (see *Tri-Council Policy Statement 2* [TCPS2], 2010, p. 8). Therefore, the researcher successfully completed a course on ethical conduct for research involving humans (TCPS 2: CORE) offered through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. (See Appendix D: TCPS 2: CORE.) Finally, the study was also conducted in accordance with requirements for ethical research with human participants, as established by the Brock University Ethics Review Board (see Appendix E).

No substantial risks were identified. However, since participants were asked to reflect on equitable leadership ideas that informed their practice and their choices of action about a potentially sensitive issue, it is possible that participants may have felt stressed or felt that the study was intrusive into their role as school leaders. To address these issues, I reassured participants that the person who had referred them would not know whether or not they participated in the study, that the study was not evaluative.

During the recruitment process and prior to the interview, I clearly informed participants that they were participating in a research study and of the purposes of the study. Participants had the right to refuse to participate in the study or withdraw from the study at any time. As part of the informed consent process, I attached a consent form (Appendix C) to emails confirming participation and provided instruction on how to complete the form. The information contained in the consent form was reviewed prior to interviews.

Prior to the interview, participants were informed that the information they provided during the study was confidential and would not be used for any other purposes

other than to help the researcher understand connections between equitable leadership knowledge and institutional obligations, norms and values. Participants were also advised that they could choose not to answer any questions they felt would put them at risk; that they did not have to participate in the study or feel coerced to participate in the study because they were referred by a colleague/friend and that they could withdraw consent or withdraw from the study at any time without negative repercussions.

Finally, I took steps to protect the anonymity of research sites and participants by assigning numbers to research sites, assigning pseudonyms to participants, and developing a composite picture of the group during data analysis.

Limitations of the Study

This study involved 11 participants, five from Ontario, Canada and six from Kisumu County, Kenya. This sample size was appropriate for exploratory research. Substantive theories emerged from the researcher's analysis of what they observed in the field and the data (Charmaz, 2006, 2011; Romalho, Adams, Huggard, & Hoare, 2015). However, with constructivist grounded theory studies, the researcher's involvement is not neutral (Charmaz, 2011; Romalho et al., 2015). As such, it is possible that the proposed theory is influenced by my experiences and epistemological, and ontological stance. Furthermore, because the data primarily consisted of a retrospective inspection of select events, the results do not provide sufficient information for a detailed analysis of all sensemaking processes at play in educational institutions related to equitable leadership knowledge. Conclusions from the study and the processes for connecting abstract ideas to practice are suggestive of possible avenues of understanding educational institutions and

equitable leadership. The study is neither exhaustive nor applicable in all educational situations.

The study used constructivist grounded theory, within a qualitative approach. In qualitative studies, researchers focus on understanding participants' meanings in contextual and bounded settings. Therefore, the use of constructivist grounded theory within a qualitative research methodology excelled at bringing an understanding of this complex issue (Charmaz, 2011; Creswell, 2012). The next chapter presents the study's findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: STUDY FINDINGS

This study used constructivist grounded theory within a qualitative design to explore the influence of institutional factors on Kenyan and Canadian school principals' constructions of equitable leadership knowledge and practice. Eleven school principals participated in the study. Out of the 11 participants, six participants were from Kisumu County, Kenya and five were from the Greater Toronto Area, Canada. This chapter presents the study's findings. The issue of equity and inclusive education was used as an entry point into understanding of the connections between institutional factors and individual constructions of equitable leadership knowledge and practice. The findings are also presented in a way that focuses attention on events, meanings, interactions, and interpersonal relationships that influenced equitable leadership knowledge distinctions. This focus is deliberate, partly because knowledge distinctions are based on claims that individual and group practices are rooted in explicit knowledge and sanctioned through the adoption of professional norms.

The chapter starts by outlining how participants conceptualized equitable leadership knowledge. These concepts include equitable leadership as an emerging concept, and equitable leadership as shared and inclusive leadership, as equal access, and as equitable outcomes. The chapter then presents findings related to equitable leadership knowledge concepts, including ideas that connect equitable leadership to broader educational leadership ideas. The chapter also outlines the steps and processes that individuals took to link explicit and tacit equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations. The chapter concludes by sketching out challenges to equitable leadership that arose out of knowledge ideas rooted in school texts such as policies, codes of conduct, and assessment frameworks.

Conceptualizing Equitable Leadership in Education

The findings revealed that equitable leadership has diverse conceptual underpinnings and understandings, including those that are institutional, contextual, and personal in nature in Kenya and Canada. These different understandings of equitable leadership existed among a small group of participants within as well as across educational contexts. The diverse conceptualizations included ideas such as: shared and inclusive leadership, equitable outcomes, equal access, quality leadership, fairness, equitable treatment, and inclusion. Second, the study's results show that the two research contexts had different exposure levels to terminologies such as equitable leadership and inclusive education. While equitable leadership was identified as an emerging concept in Kenya, it has been a constant in Canadian discursive practices for about 30 years. Third, Kenyan and Canadian study participants linked equitable leadership to school funding, poverty, and differential access and outcomes. Despite the different contexts, Kenyan and Canadian participants' understanding of equitable leadership coalesced around shared and inclusive leadership, equal access, and equitable outcomes. These equitable leadership ideas are explored below. The section first explores equitable leadership as an emerging concept in Kenya and as a common catch-phrase in Canada. Thereafter, the various equitable leadership ideas are presented.

Equitable Leadership as an Emerging Concept and as a Common Catch-Phrase

Results show that equitable leadership is an emerging concept among Kenyan participants. Accordingly, equitable leadership was characterized by Mercy as an "idea that is emerging" in Kenyan educational leadership discourse. Other participants' assertions, although different, confirm that equitable leadership is an emerging concept.

Specifically, Mary remarked that equitable leadership “is a concept that I am remotely understanding. ... It’s a concept I’m trying to understand, but it is still so remote.”

Benson noted that, “I’m not sure...what comes to mind is quality leadership.” Diane observed, “I am not entirely sure, but I think of it as a kind of leadership where the administrators or persons who are looked at as leaders consider fairness or use a management style that is composed of shared responsibility.” Finally, Patrick portrayed it as a “new idea.” Elaborating, he indicated that “in the past there was no equitable leadership...most principals did things singlehanded. They were not blamed...the blame was on other people. They could transfer blame even if they did something wrong.”

Attempting to relate equitable leadership to emerging educational leadership practice expectations, Diane observed “the increasing complexity and changes in the education system...make it impossible not to imagine what equitable leadership is and can be.” Other participants concurred, observing that recent legislative changes had a profound influence on their ideas of equitable leadership knowledge. Examples of the changes that influenced equitable leadership knowledge included, legislation on individual rights and freedoms and the Children’s Act. All Kenyan participants also reported that changes in educational decision-making practices stipulated in the Teachers’ Code of Regulations, the Constitution of Kenya of 2010 on leadership integrity and Basic Education Act of 2013 contributed to equitable leadership knowledge emergence.

Further, because the idea of equitable leadership is relatively new, Kenyan participants described discernible turning points to their understanding of the concept in various ways. According to Patrick,

I noticed that equitable leadership was gaining momentum when individuals

displayed more awareness of their basic rights and what they wanted...now, they are ready for and demand their rights. It's actually from both teachers, students and support staff.

Another participant, Mary, observed,

I noticed recently that other principals are involving others and are answerable to this aspect of leadership. The expectation to be inclusive is making us become more responsible, knowing that it is your duty to involve others in decisions.

Mercy noted,

When I was in school, teachers' words were final and you were not allowed to question anybody, you only obeyed. But that is not the case. Now students have a right to tell you "NO, I think there you are wrong" and you are expected to listen...our teachers used a lot of intimidation in order to get things done. But, you cannot use that now... leadership has changed. You cannot be authoritarian and expect to get things done.

Narrating his evolving understanding of equitable leadership, Benson indicated,

A lot of things I have learned as a leader have influenced my present understanding of equitable leadership. I have learned to be accommodative, be tolerant, to sympathize, and even empathize with teachers. They form part of what I do and think of in terms of equitable leadership. I have learnt to include teachers when making school decisions. You cannot be a boss all the time. On your own, you will not manage. ... You need others.

This turning point occurred when Benson assumed a school administrator role at a school that was underperforming in Kenya national examinations, a standardized test for all

Grade 12 (Form Four) students in Kenya. Benson had transferred from a high performing school and wanted to incorporate ideas from his former school but experienced a lot of resistance from teachers. To address teacher resistance, Benson indicated:

I called a group of teachers whom I had found there. ...Then they told me how they had done things. After discussions, we merged what they had been doing well with what I wanted to be done. ... That was the turning point in my leadership to be accommodative and consultative, which is essential in equitable leadership.

Finally, institutional changes arising from stakeholder consultations and related to attendant legal accountabilities influenced the emergence of equitable leadership in education in Kenya. Narrating these influences, Patrick noted:

Leadership has actually changed. ... Current leadership is owned by those you are serving as opposed to when leadership was on the principal alone. So anything you do now, you do it from the position that somebody will scrutinize your actions and even take you to court. So anytime you make a complex decision you first look at the new Code of Regulations, then look at the Education Act, and the new Constitution of Kenya. You must look at what those three documents stipulate in relation to community participation, human rights, children's rights... before making a decision.

Other participants concurred with Patrick and they also associated discernible equitable leadership knowledge turning points to constitutional change in Kenya.

From the foregoing, equitable leadership knowledge is both an evolving concept and a recent educational phenomenon in Kenya. Specifically, various ideas related to

shared and inclusive leadership and respect for individual rights and freedoms were fundamental in what participants described as turning points for equitable leadership in Kenya. Additionally, it is evident that a major ideological change has occurred with the replacement of a prior constitution geared to the preservation of a one-party state to one that is fashioned around western democratic principles. The constitutional change has contributed to the opening up of democratic space and a shift in equitable leadership knowledge. At the centre of this emerging knowledge base in Kenya are international covenants and legislative acts, regulations, and the new constitution.

With respect to Canada, participants confirmed that concepts such as equitable leadership and equity and inclusive education have been part of Canadian educational discourse for more than a decade. For instance, Matthew reported: “I have been thinking and doing some studying and reading about equity for over a decade...since my university days.” Linking his educational leadership practice to these knowledge ideas he also stated that,

I implement my philosophy of equitable leadership from the first day I enter a school. This is done in a number of ways...first with an equitable leadership plan that is established even before I entered the building. Obviously, I had to have a clear plan in my own head before I could implement it. Then I decide on the strategies I would do to introduce it. This would involve individual meetings with the staff, establishing who the “power people” were on the staff... and most important of all, leading by example.

Other participants also confirmed that these concepts were widely accepted and used in school discussions related to student success. According to Peter, for example,

ideas related to equity, equitable leadership, and social justice had somehow become second nature in educational practices. Julian noted that among his colleagues, everyone understood and “talks about equitable leadership. ... It is a popular catch-phrase... although means different things.” Providing an ecumenical perspective, Dorothy, a Catholic school principal explained that the terminologies were widely used in her school since “equity and inclusion is consistent with biblical teachings and our board’s practices. ... Every person possesses an intrinsic dignity which must always be respected.” Finally, all Canadian participants indicated that schools and school boards had clear policy guidelines regarding equity and inclusive education. These policy guidelines and other institutional texts informed their understanding of equitable leadership.

Having first explored different starting points associated with equitable leadership in Kenya and Canada, the next section presents specific equitable leadership concepts—shared and inclusive leadership, equitable access, and equitable outcomes.

Equitable Leadership as Shared and Inclusive Leadership

Constructions of equitable leadership as shared and inclusive leadership were echoed by a number of participants in both Kenya and Canada. These concepts were used interchangeably by participants. The Kenyan school principals’ concepts of shared and inclusive leadership were related to perceptions that individuals in leadership positions are expected to include parents, students, community, school boards, Ministry of Education (KE), and the Teachers Service Commission in school decisions. These linkages between shared leadership and inclusion of school stakeholders in decision-making were expressed by all participants from Kenya. In addition, constructs related to shared and inclusive leadership were used in relation to individual decisions. Patrick

observed that individual decisions had to be in tandem with school regulations, Board of Management expectations, and legal obligations and institutional policy expectations related to shared leadership. Separating these two equitable leadership concepts, results show that shared leadership concepts among Kenyan participants were related to team actions. For instance, Patrick noted that shared leadership occurred when,

All team members are responsible and delegations are done. We are all answerable and it is not about an individual concept of leadership. ...We now have a broad base of leadership starting from student councils, parent councils, teachers, the board...we are all accountable and share aspects of leadership. ... This helps to bring equity in schools because many individuals can participate in decision-making.

John, a principal at a mixed day school noted that shared leadership was about having “equal share in decision making and equal responsibility...everyone has an equal share. One is not singled out. ... Leadership does not rest on one particular person. It is where everyone takes the blame, everyone takes the praise.” According to Mary, shared leadership happened when all team members get their work done collectively and when they are “answerable to the different tasks and roles.” Mary also noted that shared leadership occurred when “various school teams and committees are responsible for specific leadership tasks relating to a particular department or issue... Leadership is shared with these teams.”

Equitable leadership as shared and inclusive leadership concepts were also expressed by Canadian participants. However, only two Canadian principals, Dorothy and Julian, described aspects of equitable leadership as a shared leadership. Explaining

practices related to equitable leadership as shared leadership, Dorothy reported that shared leadership occurred in instances when school principals “share decision-making power with teachers and students.” In Julian’s case, shared leadership occurred when “each of the parties; staff, parents and even students, share the decisions that affect the school.” Even without explicitly talking about equitable leadership as shared leadership, in their resolution of equity and inclusive education issues all participants spoke of involving various stakeholders in school decisions. For instance, Julian spoke about involving teachers in decisions about learning and teaching issues. Peter, another principal, also spoke of involving parent councils and school boards on school funding and policy issues.

Specific constructions of equitable leadership as shared leadership were also reflected in Canadian participants’ narratives regarding equitable outcomes and teamwork within schools. Dorothy reported that the principals’ role included “establishing a culture of shared responsibility in the school. ... I work with my teachers and school community to translate the Board’s equity vision into school plans that focus on student achievement.” Julian noted:

We work as a team. My teachers play a central role in our achievements. ... They lead subject teaching teams, special projects and influence students’ performances and outcomes. To ensure that we are all on the same page, we consult regularly...[and] we also take responsibility for certain areas of improvement. ... I put them in charge of certain aspects of how we address student and teacher concerns.

Similar assertions were expressed by Peter who constructed shared leadership from the perspective of teamwork, collaboration, and shared responsibility as follows:

Our school prides itself in our diversity. However, in order to close the performance gap among our students, my team knows that we have to collaborate, take individual and collective responsibility and take leadership. ... It takes shared responsibility to champion academic excellence to the entire school community.

Here, shared responsibility meant working together to achieve academic excellence.

Extending the thought on the twinning of shared responsibility and shared leadership, Sophia confirmed,

All teachers are instructional leaders. They do not rely on me to address the needs of students in the classrooms. ... They rely on each other. ... Our school has learning teams composed of representatives from various school departments. These teams are nominated by fellow teachers...their focus is on bridging the achievement gap. They are true leaders.

Furthermore, Sophia noted that as a school principal it was her role to “cultivate leadership skills in others and create an atmosphere where students, staff and families feel a sense of belonging to the [school] community.” Therefore, the evocation of equitable leadership as shared leadership, although more pronounced among Kenyan study participants was implicit among Canadian participants’ discourses.

The terms inclusion and inclusive leadership were used interchangeably by study participants in both Kenya and Canada to describe stakeholder inclusion in their definitions of equitable leadership. For example, within the Kenyan context, Patrick reported that inclusive leadership meant “involving staff, parents, students, and the school

board of governors in critical school decisions in order to ensure buy-in.” Similarly for Diane, inclusive leadership was intertwined with school ownership, since

educational institutions are partially owned by the government, the community, and also by the parents. These stakeholders must be included in critical decisions. In particular, the parents must be included in decisions. ... They have a greater stake because they are the ones who fund school infrastructure.

According to John, inclusive leadership occurred when everyone was included in decision-making. Narrating an incident that represented a watershed moment in inclusive leadership, John indicated that

our school’s head of academics consulted parents of Form Three (Grade 11) students regarding plans to provide holiday tuition. ... It was agreed [between parents and the school administration] that we would extend the school term by two weeks. The decision had to be reversed when students rejected the idea because they were not involved. ... The culture of making decisions on behalf of other individuals without consulting them is coming to an end very fast.

Other Kenyan participants, Benson and Mercy also reported that inclusive leadership meant consulting with various school communities and stakeholders. Although there were few explicit connections between equitable leadership and inclusive leadership, Kenyan participants understood inclusive leadership as a leadership expectation attached to the principalship by the Ministry of Education (KE) and the TSC.

Canadian participants indicated that equitable leadership as inclusive leadership was also about involving stakeholders in school decisions. According to Matthew, a school principal, ideas related to inclusion and inclusive leadership were central

principles of schools. Peter also asserted that inclusion and inclusive leadership were important to not only schools but important to Canadian society as a whole. Specifically, Dorothy posited that inclusive leadership meant “being open to different ideas and including students, parents, community in school decisions.” According to Matthew, inclusive leadership meant involving educational stakeholders, especially parents, in decisions concerning their children’s schooling. Inclusive leadership was also about soliciting and incorporating input from parents, students and teachers for Sophia and meant including students with disabilities in school decisions to Peter. These practices were meant to involve and ultimately ensure stakeholder support for school equity and inclusive education strategies. The following examples by Canadian participants underscored these concepts of equitable leadership as inclusive leadership. Explaining his rationale for using inclusive leadership, Matthew emphasized the importance of participatory processes to reduce resistance. He also noted that inclusive leadership involved

making sure everyone shares your values and a common purpose. ... You are asking people to change how they see things. ... They [teachers and students] will resist and won’t buy into your ideas unless they are part of the process. So I have to include everyone from the get go... [to] have an inclusive process... [and] a participatory process.

According to another principal, Sophia, inclusive leadership was about

working with students, teachers and their families to ensure that all students are learning. ... All students and teachers have the opportunity to contribute to the

success of the school. It is where we solicit ideas from and listen to everyone and use that information to make all students successful.

Inclusive leadership, according to Peter, started with

recognizing that differences within and amongst students, parents, and teachers matter... then taking the steps to involve them, bridge the differences, embrace different viewpoints. ... It's about meeting people at the middle of the bridge and ensuring their voice counts for something.

Julian explained that inclusive leadership entailed

removing barriers so that everyone can participate and be involved in school, whether it is a student, staff or parent... [and] making sure that all students feel like they are included in decisions affecting them, where there aren't obstacles in the way for students to achieve their best irrespective of personal circumstances.

Beyond inclusive leadership concepts, Canadian participants also spoke about inclusive teaching practices, when referring to meeting the learning needs of students.

Although participants acknowledged that inclusive teaching is meant to ensure all students benefit, they also focused on students whom they identified as students with learning disabilities and language and racial/ethnic minority students who predominantly experience inequitable access and outcomes.

Unmistakeably, equitable leadership as shared and inclusive leadership revolved around the belief that stakeholders, including individuals and groups within the school community in both Kenya and Canada, have a right to equal opportunity and to participate in decisions that affect them that are related to equity and inclusive education. Inclusive leadership as an equitable leadership stance was aptly captured in a Canadian

participant Julian's assertion that "when you involve all individuals and groups, you remove obstacles to equity... [which] helps students succeed despite differences. ... Students have the support to be successful amongst their peers." Taken together, shared and inclusive leadership is about stakeholder involvement, accountability, teamwork, and shared responsibilities related to student access and outcomes in Kenya and Canada.

Equitable Leadership as Equal Access

Kenyan and Canadian principals constructed equitable leadership as practices that ensured equal access to education for all students. At the root of equal access were concerns for students living in poverty, racial and/or ethnic minority students and students with disabilities. Participants indicated that household and community poverty also impacted equal access to education through unequal school funding, infrastructure, teaching, and learning resources. Race, ethnicity, and disabilities were identified as compounding important factors in educational success for some students.

Specifically, concerns regarding access to education for students living in poverty were twofold: school funding and educational resources. With respect to the Kenyan context, participants reported that the Kenyan government or Ministry of Education did not fund school infrastructure development. This lack of funding for school infrastructure was of concern to all participants. As a result, schools had to raise money from parents and the community. However, Diane noted that the ability of parents to support school initiatives through fundraising depended on whether the school was located in a poor community or in a resource rich community with schools that are located in poor areas lagging "behind in performance compared to others because parents can only support what is within their financial means." Supporting her assertions, Diane argued that

schools in resource rich areas are doing well... so you find that in the system of the four year secondary education there is some institution that are forced to run under cost of Kenya Shilling 100,000 per student in 4 years because parents cannot afford to pay higher fees. In other institutions students learn at a cost of KES 400,000... so definitely one child is in a better environment and has access to resources that impact their performance.

Similar sentiments regarding access for students from low income households were echoed by Patrick and Benson. According to Patrick, poverty within the surrounding community combined with lack of sufficient government funding meant that some schools were under resourced. For Benson, insufficient resources and/or the lack of funding translated into “insufficient infrastructure in these schools... [so] students experience access issues in schools in poor communities.”

Inequitable distribution or access to comparable educational resources was also a concern in schools located in high poverty areas. According to two study participants, Benson and Patrick, schools within poor communities do not have enough resources to support poor students primarily because of poverty. For Diane, the problem of inadequate support for students from low income households was further compounded for smaller (low enrollment) schools where “many parents struggle to pay school fees for their children.” Patrick also went on to say that

schools in less affluent communities struggle to collect fees from students and cannot meet their operational requirements. ... Students will also not attend their institutions or study within their jurisdictions because they cannot afford to pay

fees and/ or students constantly shuttle between home and school as they are sent away for lack of fees.

Implicitly, these schools did not get sufficient financial support from their parent base and struggled to help needy students. Analysing access to education implications for students, Patrick further pointed out that

the large enrollment base in large schools translates into more money or resources, which increases access. ... Their enrollment base supports teaching and learning activities and supports students who live in poverty too, even if some parents are unable to pay tuition or contribute towards infrastructure development.

These perspective show that students from low income households did not have equal access to education in Kenya.

Among Canadian participants, concerns regarding access to education for students living in poverty were intertwined with issues of race and/or ethnicity. According to Dorothy, poverty was “evident in a number of our minority school communities.” This sentiment was echoed by other participants. Linking issues of race, poverty, behavioural issues and learning, Peter explained that “I deal with a lot of behavioural problems... especially involving minority students which somewhat affect their learning.”

Furthermore, he argued that some students from racialized groups displayed poor reading abilities, lack of social skills and behavioural problems. Although Peter did not refer to a particular group, he noted that

aggression and aggressive behavioural problems... can make teachers or other students feel unsafe. ... Aggressive behaviours keep these students from learning as they are moved from one special class to special class... into classes for students

with mental health issues. They are treated differently. It seems sad, but the school system has no clue how to help these students.

According to Sophia, “some of the behaviour problems that some students exhibit are essentially related to poor learning skills...which affect their chances of success.”

Elaborating on the marginalization of groups of students, Sophia aptly pointed out that

students from poor households often exhibit behavioural problems. ... In my school they are almost exclusively visible minority groups... [and] most of them are also from poor households...because of behaviour problems, these students are underrepresented in rigorous academic programs... the school treats them differently.

Similarly, Matthew noted that “many students from these [poor and racialized] communities and those with learning disabilities end up in applied-level classes.”

Matthew also acknowledged that some minority students “do not experience the same level of access and educational outcomes... [and] are unprepared for graduation and are ineligible for many postsecondary opportunities in universities as many might not meet course entry requirements.”

A counter-narrative to these pathologies was gleaned from Sophia’s argument that the structure of the educational system limits access and chances of equitable outcomes for these students. Although we’re giving them something, the structures in place dictate almost that we need to do it this way. In a sense, we’re excluding them.

Sophia’s comment reintroduced educational institutions and systems of organizing in her explanation of differential access for racial/ethnic, poor, and differently abled students.

However, according to most Canadian participants, differences rooted in poverty, race/ethnicity and ability can cause student failure, difficulties in learning and behaviour problems. Second, it is also assumed that racial minority students belong in the low socio-economic class and possibly have behaviour problems that have to be managed.

Unpacking individual experiences dealing with issues of access for students related to race/ ethnicity and social economic status one participant, Peter, observed, although I work closely with my teachers in helping these students improve their performance... [and] I have also done so at a previous school, I still don't understand what it means to be a different kind of learner, different kind of person, and how the school should respond.

Continuing, he noted that "when I look at stats it is clear something is going on. ... Poverty and race has something to do with learning and access. ... [It is] one of those tragic issues." For Julian, his experiences working with students from diverse racial and/or ethnic and social economic backgrounds led to the following resolve:

We must help them [students] to succeed. ... I have seen great changes when we treat them as valued individuals and provide additional support... just like a student who has a learning disability must be given additional support compared to a student who doesn't have a learning disability.

Providing a more optimistic perspective, Dorothy observed that although dealing with issues of access for diverse communities could be challenging, "our school fosters a culture of inclusion while responding to the diverse learning needs of each student. ... All students are created in the image of God, and that all students can learn. ... Everyone belongs." For Julian and Dorothy, if the status quo continued then racial/ethnic minority,

differently abled, and students from low social economic backgrounds might not realize their full potential through education.

Linkages between family income, school resources, and educational access were expressed by Canadian participants. In this instance, schools in areas with low household income also had relatively fewer resources and supports available that could be used to improve student outcomes. Using his school as an example, Julian explained that “my school which is in a less affluent area has less learning resources and programs compared to Wekweeti Collegiate [pseudonym] in Rosedale area.” Similarly, Peter reported that “schools participate in fundraising activities or rely on user fees and parental support to augment school budgets [in Ontario], schools in high poverty areas raise less than half the amounts raised in schools in affluent areas.” Furthermore, according to Peter,

schools in affluent areas typically raise enough money to equip their classrooms with high-tech learning aids such as SMART Boards, laptops, better music and art classes, and school trips. ... Mine does not have the capacity to raise funds and if we do, the funds are for basic needs and the occasional school trip.

Fundraising proceeds and/or a schools inability to raise funds created an uneven playing field and increased inequity for poor students, majority of whom came from racial/ethnic minority groups.

Equitable leadership as access focused on barriers to student access. For both Canadian and Kenyan participants, access concerns were related to poverty and school funding. Furthermore, although Kenyan participants did not link student ethnicity or difference to inequitable access, their Canadian counterparts raised a number of issues related to differential access that were blamed on student race/ethnicity and abilities.

Equitable Leadership as Equitable Outcomes

Participants' concepts of equitable leadership as equitable educational outcomes were rooted in concerns with school results and educational outcomes of students. Within the Kenyan context, equitable outcomes were tied to Kenya National Examinations Council's (KNEC) results, with a specific reference to good academic performance of students in these standardized exams and within the school. As Benson described,

schools have students who are low performers, you also have students who are high performers. ... You have to know how to deal with those who are performing well and those who are under achieving in order to bring them up to par.

At the school level, equitable outcomes focused on the impact of school staffing on student outcomes as well as academic performance of students living in poverty. In particular, Patrick explained that inadequate staffing in schools combined with neighbourhood poverty impacted outcomes as follows:

My school is in a very poor community. My goal is to make sure that my students do well in the national exam and go to university. ...However, the number of teachers at my school are supposed to be 17 and we have only seven. ... The government cannot employ enough trained teachers and the school cannot employ additional qualified teachers because of lack of funds. ... This one alone will bring the schools' performance down. ... My students are disadvantaged compared to students in schools with a financial base that allows for adequate human resources.

Diane echoed similar sentiments:

We are supposed to have staff to student ratio of 1:40 and need almost 48 teachers based on enrollment. But the government has given us 31 teachers. So what do you do? The board is forced to bridge that gap. ... So someone may have imagined that we will have an equitable staff distribution but because of financial constraints, I want to imagine that it is impossible to have equitable results.

Using student performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Exams (KCSE) to demonstrate the equitable outcomes concepts, Diane explained that due to staffing

so many schools are not performing at or above average levels. When you look at the KCSE exam results nationally, almost 60% of the schools perform below average, where we go for a mean of 5.5 average out of a mean average of 12. The majority of the schools perform below 5.0, with some performing at 2 or 3 average, very many actually. How can anyone to accept these outcomes? And for so many students?

In other words, poverty, inadequate staffing, and lack of resources meant that schools, especially those located in poor communities in Kenya perennially underperformed.

Equitable leadership as equitable outcomes among Canadian participants was related to the performance of racialized groups and students living in poverty. This leadership construct was understood by Sophia as a “commitment to ensure success for all of our students. ... I also see it as promoting learning among students and educators... creating that sense of community so that we all work together in order to meet the needs of all students.” Reflecting on his experience at a school with a diverse student population, Peter narrated:

In this school, it was clear to me that equitable leadership was about equitable outcomes. The majority of students who were failing were visible minorities, male and poor... [and] the school treated all students the same, but they were not all the same. ... This was the beginning for me to rethink the issue of student outcomes.

Connections between equitable leadership and equitable outcomes also arose in relation to Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) results, as echoed by Julian:

We focus on OSSLT tests, we look at the scores and segregate data based on subject and demographics in order to understand where our students are not meeting the minimum standard for literacy. ... From the results and report cards, we then re-focus our instruction in order to provide support for students at risk of not graduating, improve outcomes for students who are failing certain subjects and improve practice.

Another dimension of equitable leadership as equitable outcomes could be gleaned from school strategies that participants used to address the achievement gap, as the following quote by Matthew illustrates:

My job is to ensure all students are successful. Here's a case where we have a segment of students failing a core subject. ... It's funny, when students fail they are blamed, when they pass the teacher takes credit. ... I'm not willing to accept this position. I simply told this teacher you have got to change your practice to meet their needs. This position was initially disconcerting. ... That's cognitive dissonance and they had to either leave or conform. Inequitable outcomes are not excusable in my school.

These claims by Canadian participants show that inequitable outcomes affected minoritized and racialized groups more than others. It is also noteworthy, that although funding was an issue in terms of meeting the needs of students in some schools, unlike their Kenyan counterparts, Canadian participants did not mention inadequate staffing.

Equitable leadership as equitable outcomes for Kenyan and Canadian participants therefore was about ensuring that success and graduation rates were equitable among all students in their schools. This understanding meant equitable success across race, ability, ethnicity, and social status. It included the removal of barriers in order to close student achievement gaps. Equitable leadership as equitable outcomes also placed expectation on Kenyan and Canadian participants to initiate school-wide equity and inclusive education strategies that ensure the success of marginalized groups. Furthermore, although there were different entry points and conceptual underpinnings to equitable leadership, participant conceptualizations in Kenya and Canada reflected practice-based approaches for resolving equity and inclusion. Intuitively, equitable leadership definitions were tied to behaviour, knowledge, and practice expectations for individuals in school leadership positions. These practice-based conceptualizations were reported as: (a) shared and inclusive approaches to educational leadership, thereby divorcing equitable leadership from individualistic and hierarchical practices, (b) equal access to education and, (c) equitable educational outcomes. The next section explores possible knowledge concepts associated with, and those that inform equitable leadership.

Equitable Leadership Knowledge Concepts

Equitable leadership knowledge encompasses overlapping, interlocking, and intersecting layers of educational leadership knowledge. Particularly, participants in both

Kenya and Canada linked their equitable leadership knowledge and practice to their training as teachers in ways that were intended to ensure equitable access and outcomes for all students. Equitable leadership knowledge and practice was also linked to (a) individual perceptions of sanctioned practices such as those contained in institutional texts, (b) individual and group understanding of ideas that should be (de)emphasized to ensure equity and inclusive education, and (c) from knowledge and practice that were believed to be applicable to their professional group.

Thus, in addition to teaching and instructional knowledge, participant constructions of equitable leadership knowledge and practice were drawn from ideas related to management and from institutional texts, such as acts, regulations, and policies that govern educational leadership and believed to lead to the realization of valued educational ends in Kenya and Canada. The following section presents ideas related to teaching and instruction, laws and legislations, management and leadership, and professional and interpersonal skills that informed participant constructions of equitable leadership knowledge and practice in Kenya and Canada.

Teaching and Instructional Knowledge

Knowledge of the teaching profession and/or instructional knowledge were constructed as an overarching requirement for equitable leadership by both Kenyan and Canadian participants because it related directly to equitable outcomes and helped to ensure access to education for students. The ability to use appropriate teaching strategies was instrumental to meeting diverse learning needs of students. For example, Kenyan participant John noted:

School principals are expected to be involved in all aspects of school administration including supervising teacher performance. ... One must first meet professional expectations and ensure a certain standard of operation of schools. ...

One must also support teachers struggling to meet students' learning needs.

Patrick echoed similar sentiments and underscored the importance of expert teaching knowledge and competence. Elaborating, he explained that "one should not only be certified as a teacher, but demonstrate teaching excellence in their area of expertise (teaching subjects) and have expert level knowledge of subject content." Content expertise was expressed as subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge that were acquired through teacher training.

Exploring the centrality of teaching knowledge to equitable leadership knowledge and practice, Benson posited:

As a principal, to ensure equitable outcomes you must have knowledge of teaching and the curriculum... including fundamental concepts, structures, and enquiry processes that can help you support teachers and make education accessible to all your students.

He also explained that teaching knowledge enabled administrators to support their teachers in developing strategies for low-performing students.

In addition to teaching knowledge, Diane and Patrick pointed out that knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and their values was critical when working with teachers in meeting needs of students falling through the cracks. Such knowledge helped teachers and principals to ensure subject content was meaningful and relevant to all students. Similarly, pedagogical knowledge and curriculum supervision were identified as critical

to equitable leadership by two participants, Mercy and Mary. Patrick also confirmed that for school administrators, pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, and knowledge of educational ends helped them to “bridge the gap between the practice of teaching and other daily administrative duties.” Arguably therefore, such knowledge was instrumental to equity and inclusive education goals.

Canadian participants were unanimous in their understanding of instructional knowledge as a catalyst for equitable leadership. Dorothy asserted that instructional knowledge supported equitable leadership endeavours because “I have to provide leadership to the instructional program. ... I am expected to be knowledgeable and effective in supporting school improvement planning processes, set expectations for learning outcomes and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.” Expressing similar comments, Julian explained:

I work with teachers to ensure that we all focus on student learning and outcomes. ... When some of our students are not doing well, I become the cheerleader to school collaboration so that teachers can work together to improve instruction. ... It's my role to keep everyone focused toward school goals. You cannot be effective if you don't have knowledge of education and teaching.

Locating himself within teaching and learning discourse, Julian continued:

I am a teacher, instructional leader, and principal in that order. My teacher knowledge and experience allows me to really put my energy and my influence into the classroom instruction and outcome element. ... I can affect change in classroom instruction and support my teachers. ... I can effectively contribute and lead discussions regarding our students' learning needs, resource requirements

and assessment criteria after looking at student data... and get to the point where I identify exact areas our students are failing across culture and grade levels in comparison to other schools.

Matthew also posited that

because of my instructional knowledge, I can identify and champion teaching strategies that are most conducive to student success, improve our school equity results by targeting key perceptions, stereotypes, and acts of discrimination that impact teaching ... [and] support teachers and infuse access and equity issues into the curriculum. ... Because of my position and expertise, my contributions sometimes form the basis for the understanding and appreciation of equity and inclusive education on a more fundamental level, especially for new teachers.

Concurring, Peter specified that

I use my instructional expertise to help teachers address the challenging circumstances that some of our students bring to the classroom. ... My case in point, if I didn't understand instructional dynamics, I would have probably assumed, as did this teacher... the problem was solely with students not learning.

Finally, Sophia stated that without instructional knowledge, her work towards ensuring equity and inclusive education could be "challenging, probably detrimental and perceived as ill-informed by the teachers."

From the foregoing, school administrators' knowledge of teaching and/or instructional knowledge represented a central knowledge and practice element related to equitable access and outcomes for students in Kenya and Canada. In particular, pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, and knowledge of educational ends

helped them to bridge the gap between the equity and inclusive education needs, practice of teaching and other daily administrative duties. In addition, the knowledge was instrumental in helping school administrators and teachers to frame instructional imperatives and to champion teaching approaches that ensured equity and inclusion.

Knowledge of Legislation and Policies

School policies, codes of conduct, laws, and regulations influenced equitable leadership knowledge and practice in both Kenya and Canada. The results show that having knowledge of policies and rules related to equitable leadership provided guidelines regarding sanctioned practices and institutional expectations. The frequency with which participants referred to these documents was slightly different between Kenyan and Canadian participants. For instance, Kenyan participants indicated that they reviewed institutional documents prior to their actions more times than their Canadian counterparts. However, the motivation for locating knowledge in these institutional texts was based on fear of sanctions and belief that the knowledge represented objective facts.

The Kenyan participants, for example Diane, identified knowledge of “legislations and regulations that govern the management of educational institutions... such as Student and Teacher Codes of Conduct, Ministry of Education Codes and Regulations, the Constitution, and human rights law” as core to equitable leadership knowledge and practice. Patrick also related equitable leadership to “knowledge of Code of Regulations, the Education Act and the Children’s Act.” In addition, knowledge of Ministry of Education guidelines on student discipline were identified by Diane, John, and Mary as important to equitable leadership. Elaborating, Diane noted that knowledge

of laws, regulations, and guidelines ensured that school administrator decisions were aligned with the law and do not contribute to inequity.

Although study participants from Kenya reported that there were no specific school-level equity policies, they noted that many institutional texts informed their equitable leadership knowledge. These texts included: (a) the Bill of Rights contained in the new Constitution of Kenya of 2010; (b) 2010 Ministry of Education Guidelines for Student Councils.; (c) National School Guidelines by the Ministry of Education; (d) 2003 Teachers Service Commission (TSC) Code of Conduct and Ethics; and (e) 2012 Policy Framework for Education which aligned education and training to the Constitution of Kenya (2010). According to Diane, it was vital for school administrators to incorporate these texts in their equitable leadership ideas, because

you will not survive if you don't practice the policies as stated by the main bodies...Ministry of Education, because it has a mandate prescribed by the national government. Then you have the TSC... [which] gives you your terms of reference as the head of the institution. ... The TSC's Code of Regulations and TSC Act helps you manage the teachers. ... Then there's the human rights legislation.

Elaborating, she explained that these texts contained explicit instructions related to issues that touched on equity and inclusion. As such,

if you do not follow the rules and procedures, you can be in conflict and confrontation with many other institutions. ... Every time and in whatever you are doing as a principal, you must look around at the level of policy that you are operating or the guidelines, to see which policy or guideline you are abiding by

and what you could be contravening.

The centrality of knowledge of policies and regulations to equitable leadership was also echoed by John and Patrick. These participants indicated that they relied on National School Guidelines by the Ministry of Education when addressing matters related to equity, inclusion, student performance, and stakeholder involvement. Specifically, John and Patrick reported that they incorporated knowledge of specific guidelines, and then made decisions that they were sure were supported. They also made decisions based on the school regulations and guidelines which they knew were always in tandem with basic human rights. Furthermore, Patrick argued that equitable leadership demanded that

anytime you make a complex decision you look at the Code of Regulations, you look at the Education Act, and then you go back to the Constitution of Kenya. So you must look at what those three stipulate especially on Basic Human Rights, the Children's Act, then you look at your situation on the ground.

Mercy, on the other hand stated that institutional texts such as the Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct, and the Constitution were useful as guidelines before they took action. Mary, a deputy principal indicated that none of their actions as school administrators can be taken outside these institutional texts. In her view, the institutional texts helped all stakeholders to understand the importance of the guidelines. The texts also controlled the behaviours of the stakeholders, which was important in education.

Institutional texts that informed equitable leadership, such as the school code of conduct, were also linked to school accountability. These linkages could be gleaned from Patrick's assertions that school guidelines ensured, "we [leaders] are held accountable... that the decision is aligned with institutional expectations, and legal requirements or basic

rights... otherwise one can be replaced by someone who can follow rules.” Expressing similar thoughts, Mary explained that as an administrator,

your decision must be in line with what the school requires ... I would say that you make your independent judgement and conclusion... knowing that the fall back strategy is being aligned with the values of the school, the policy of the school. Though you don’t really refer to those documents, but you still ask if it is in line with what is expected.

Continuing, she explained that schools used these rules and expectations as a reference point and as a guide when making decisions.” Concurring, Mercy stated that,

schools have rules and regulations and the penalties for disobeying. We give these rules and regulations to the students. If they go against them they get punished... because they agreed to conform to school rules when they joined the school. ... Punishment will be given as stated.

Put differently, Patrick argued that because of rules, policies, and regulations, schools had “become more focused in what we do and do it according to the law... that makes leadership to be more responsive. ... Without having this knowledge clearly stated, you can suffer the consequences of making a mistake in leadership.”

Sentiments regarding the importance of having knowledge of and/or being familiar with school/board equity and inclusive education policies were also expressed by Canadian participants. Canadian participants explained that school, Board and Ontario Ministry of Education policies, rules, and regulations were frameworks within which to situate individual practices. However, particular institutional texts were still identified as crucial to equitable leadership. These institutional texts included the Ontario Human

Rights Code and Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy of 2009. According to Peter, these texts were helpful to equitable leadership because they provided a framework for building an inclusive education system. They also contained helpful ideas regarding issues of marginalization and practices for reducing barriers to student achievement. Other participants also confirmed that Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, hereafter referred to as the Strategy, informed their knowledge. The document was perceived to provide an overarching policy framework and aligned with the Human Rights Code, the Ontario Education Act, and the Constitution. The Strategy was mentioned by all participants. For example, Peter explained that,

our School Board's Integrated Equity Framework Action Plan, which is adapted from the Strategy helps the school to embed equity in everything... beginning with professional development training to our daily teaching practices that support our equity priorities. ... Our board's policy also addresses conditions for improved student achievement.

Sophia spoke about her Board's Equity and Inclusive Education policy which outlined our Board's commitment to creating conducive learning environments for all students. ... I have a copy on the wall. ... It helps all of us work towards equitable achievement for all students. ... Really it's about access, outcomes and inclusion. Sophia also observed that her school board's Equity and Inclusive Education policy was based on recommendations contained in the Strategy and "aligned with the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Board's Human Rights policy #51, the Safe Schools Policy, and the Ontario Leadership Framework."

In different ways, the notion that these documents articulated and explained equity and inclusive education expectations for “school leaders and school boards...and the inclusion and participation of students, teachers, parents, and other diverse community partners in school matters” was echoed by Matthew. Understandably, Julian’s argument that “if one does not understand these critical texts, they can offend a lot of people...[and] will not be effective as their focus would be distracted from student learning and outcomes since they would spend a lot of time putting out unnecessary fires” underscores the influence of these regulative texts on sanctioning behaviour and in setting equity and inclusive education expectations amongst stakeholders. Thus, familiarity with institutional texts, such as equity and inclusive education strategy, school equity policies, Ontario’s human rights code, and the principles of anti-oppression were critical to how individuals understood equitable leadership.

Indubitably, institutional texts such as policies and legislations informed Canadian and Kenyan study participants’ equitable leadership knowledge. These texts were referred to by participants as part of their daily practice. The texts also represented overarching frameworks related to equity and inclusive educational goals.

Management and Leadership Knowledge

General knowledge of educational management supported equitable leadership endeavours. For instance, Kenyan participants noted that general knowledge of management enabled individuals to identify leadership approaches might lead to equitable outcomes. Management knowledge was “important for managing teaching and learning, ensuring positive exam results, good team spirit among teachers, and positive

relationships with students, parents, teachers, and the board of management” (John).

Linking existing knowledge to emerging equitable leadership concepts, Mercy revealed:

While this is still a relatively new idea, we use our knowledge of management to solve these problems. ... I think knowledge of management gives you the skills to analyze the issue, analyze policies and regulations, and then make a decision that is supported. ... Management knowledge also teaches you how to manage staff, students, and resources relevant for equitable leadership.

Furthermore, Diane indicated that because knowledge of general leadership was key to the management of people and resources, it was important to equity and inclusive education. Clarifying, she noted that “It is possible to gain equitable leadership knowledge through comprehension, reasoning, and reflection. ... We can draw on our knowledge of management to respond to equity needs of students, teachers, and stakeholders.” Thus, knowledge of management and leadership contributed to equitable outcomes as well as successful management of equity issues in Kenyan schools.

From the Canadian context, participants spoke of educational leadership knowledge as critical for equity and inclusion in education. For example, Julian observed:

In my board special attention is paid to the appointment, placement and mentorship of administrators. Professional development courses are offered and there is a Board expectation that their administrators will adhere to the established policies from the board and the Ministry of Education. It is the responsibility of the principal’s superiors ... [from the] superintendent of education right up to the director of education... that they advise and support their principals in the schools.

Another participant also identified the importance of incoming skills at the point of hiring. Describing her incoming skills, Dorothy explained that “I was familiar with school legal issues, teacher and student issues, and school supervision issues.” The skills at the point of hiring reflect leadership and management knowledge, including those that are acquired as a result of principal training, mentorship, and support.

Professional and Interpersonal Skills

When reflecting on conceptions of equitable leadership competencies, skills and qualities, Kenyan and Canadian participants recorded a number of similarities as well as differences in terms of professional and interpersonal skills necessary for equitable leadership. For example, Kenyan participants identified motivation and counselling as well as tolerance, transparency, and honesty as important competencies for equitable leaders to possess. These skills and qualities were not identified by Canadian participants. Similarly, while Canadian participants highlighted the importance of various interpersonal skills such as, negotiation skills, cultural competency, and community engagement skills in relation to equitable leadership, these skills were not highlighted by Kenyan participants. These ideas are explored below.

Although there were no Canadian comparisons, motivation skills were critical in Kenyan participants’ constructions of equitable leadership knowledge. For example, Patrick stated that equitable leaders needed “motivational skills in order to be able to rally students, staff, and other stakeholders and to stay motivated themselves.” Explaining the lack of motivation for ensuring equity and inclusion in education, Mercy pointed out that

equitable leadership is often not supported... so there is very low motivation to do the right thing. Nobody recognizes what you are doing unless your students are

excelling in national exams...which they say is your job. ...Your time and your sacrifices are not considered.

John had the following to say regarding motivation skills:

You have to find ways to motivate the others to work with and support your idea.

In fact it takes courage, determination and to be skillful in motivating to make things move. It is important for everyone to be on board... or the majority must be involved... so we have to motivate our teams.

In other words, motivated individuals were able to achieve and contribute to equity goals.

Counselling skills was also not raised by Canadian participants. From the Kenyan context, counselling skills helped administrators deal with difficult issues facing teachers and students. Those issues included equity and inclusion. They also revolved around teaching strategies that led to equity. For instance, Patrick observed:

I use counselling skills with teachers and students...when a teacher's performance is impacting student outcomes, when teachers and students have personal issues that might require counselling. ... As a senior principal, I support and counsel other principal colleagues who are experiencing difficulties. I also share my experiences with other schools so that they can excel in the national exams. ...

Counselling and support are critical to new school principals... [and] equitable leadership issues are often complex and can polarize the community.

Relating counselling skills to principals' TSC delegated role, Diane explained:

You double up as a counsellor for the teacher when they have problems. Let's say they cannot perform their duties. ...You have to take time off your duties to listen to them, calm them down, counsel them, and help them find solutions.

Mary and Mercy, both deputy principals, also reported that they routinely drew on their counselling skills to support their school's guidance counselors and to counsel students on personal, academic, and behavioural matters. From these explanations, it is evident that counselling skills were linked to leadership practices, including those that address equity and inclusive education issues.

Canadian participants identified negotiation and community engagement skills, cross-cultural competency, and dispositions such as commitment to equity and inclusive education and being professional as important for equitable leadership. With respect to negotiation and community engagement skills, participants noted that equitable outcomes and conducive learning environments are enhanced when school leaders have good negotiation skills. For example, Dorothy observed that it was the principals' role to "foster collaborative relationships with all staff, parents and all members of the broader school community." Julian observed that when people do not share the same core values or agree on solutions, "conflicts arise and so you need good negotiation skills to reduce conflicts, especially between teachers and students, between teachers and themselves." Matthew underscored the importance of strong negotiation, facilitation, and conflict management skills when dealing with contentious issues around equity. He also reported that during negotiations, it is important for individuals to ensure that

the process [negotiation] is participatory, you ensure that you genuinely consult with people. ... The result is something that we all can live with. ...Issues [equity] can be very emotional... so every time a difficult decision has to be made, emotions quickly take over because sometimes it feels like a personal attack. That is when I have to remind everyone to focus on the issue and on the benefits of

working together. ... You need to bring people together to succeed... [and] you need to be a good negotiator to bring people to the same page.

Peter also asserted that negotiations involved “members of the entire school community right from the beginning. You cannot negotiate with only a section of the school community. ... Stakeholders bring various assets which enhance educational outcomes.”

Community engagement entailed various activities. Sophia, for example, shared the following:

I work with students, staff, and community members... Though the focus is on supports to students, I also make sure the school community understands our equity and inclusive education policies and school limitations. ... I try to lead honest conversations about inequities that our students experience and what the school is doing to address them.

She explained that community engagement skills were vital because

our parent community is aware of the Boards’ equity policy. For these parents you have to be aware of what they expect... and they expect you to get involved if they are not getting through to the teachers or if their child is not doing well in a particular class. ... You have to listen and negotiate with them regarding what is possible and what is not possible.

Perceptibly, skills in community engagement and negotiation were inseparable from equitable leadership practices in Canada.

Among Kenyan participants, community engagement and negotiation skills were not articulated as expressly linked to equitable leadership knowledge and practices.

However, Kenyan participants noted that they engaged various stakeholders. Community

engagement was also a professional expectation mandated by the Ministry of Education and infused in the new constitutional dispensation. Thus, community engagement was primarily linked to stakeholder consultations and school decision-making practices.

Cross-cultural competency was an important knowledge base for equitable leadership. However, there were no comparisons from Kenya participants. This is perhaps due to the perception among Kenyan school administrators that the students in most Kenyan schools come from a homogenous group. According to Canadian participants, cross-cultural competency was understood as being “aware of differences in culture, learning, and participation among my student populations and the school community” (Peter). Sharing an aspect of cultural competency, Julian observed,

I have this student in Grade 10. ... He is failing a few subjects. I spoke with him the other day and found out that his family is going through a rough time. ... I see that he is clearly very emotional. His family and social situation are affecting his studies. But he is not alone in this. ... I am always aware of this when a student is referred to me.

He elaborated that during professional development activities, they “talk about the issues their students are facing and how to address them. ... The discussions help my team to show how much we know our students and to develop cultural competency skills.”

Another perspective on cross-cultural competency was presented by Sophia as follows: It is “when we all understand their [students’] unique situations and use teaching approaches that engage diverse student populations... [to] take into account student abilities, needs, and interests.” Elaborating, she indicated that

I really think if we are going to educate all students, I mean truly implement equitable education, not just ticking boxes... we must recognize the different cultures in our school community and personalize our teaching. ... We just can't use traditional academic approaches and expect that these students are going to be successful, especially if they have a number of things that they are trying to address outside of school.

Cultural competency therefore was about enhancing student outcomes. It encompassed social skills and built on students' cultural capital. In addition to being knowledgeable about school communities, it meant recognizing the multiple student identities that existed in the school and creating school cultures that supported student success.

Commitment to equity and inclusive education was identified as a key equitable leadership quality by Kenyan and Canadian participants. According to Canadian participants, commitment was tied to school equity and inclusive education goals. All participants described themselves as individuals committed to ensuring equitable education for all students. For example, Sophia stated:

I am committed to equity and inclusive education, it is hard work. Every day I remind myself of this commitment. ... One has to be really serious and take to heart the idea of educating every single student. ... I also work hard to ensure everyone in the school has that commitment, you know every teacher in every classroom. ... It helps when our parents and our board has that commitment. ... My teachers and I work together to identify barriers that limit student learning. ... We organize workshops and learn from each other... [and] by promoting learning

among educators we are strengthening our school community's commitment to inclusive education.

At a personal level, commitment to equity and inclusive education was expressed by Matthew as follows, "I am committed to achieving equity goals for my school... so I must be explicit about our equity principles, values... [and] champion practices that will allow our students to learn... [and] provide professional development support to teachers." Whereas, institutional commitment to equity and inclusive education was evident to Julian through "policies, programs and decisions that reflect our schools equity values."

In comparison, Kenyan participants spoke of personal commitment to the equity and inclusion in education cause. According to John and Patrick, personal commitment to equitable leadership called upon individuals to put aside other priorities so that they could follow through on issues of equity. In particular, Patrick argued that it meant taking the time to "gain the trust of my stakeholders." For Diane, commitment was related to student outcomes and measured through "individual teacher performance in assigned teaching tasks and their ability to champion issues that lead to student success." Thus, commitment to equity and inclusive education was expressed in personal and institutional terms. It revolved around leadership and support for equity in education. It also meant individual commitment to equity and inclusive education goals in both study contexts.

Study participants identified professionalism and various qualities and dispositions as important for equitable leadership. Professionalism for Kenyan participants revolved around desired behaviours as well as personal qualities such as tolerance, honesty, and transparency. Tolerance as a professional behaviour, was deemed

a desirable quality in equitable leaders because it enabled individuals to take the time to understand and address complex educational issues. Elucidating, Benson explained that:

If you are so rigid and intolerant, there are people who just fear you, you instill that fear and then the performance of the teachers, students, and school will be so low. ... You must be tolerant because that can affect the whole system.

While Benson's example alludes to interpersonal competences such as treating others with respect, other concepts of professionalism and tolerance, were related to desired behaviours in teachers and principals. For example, participants spoke about the importance of professionalism for teachers and principals. Giving an example on teacher professionalism, Benson stated: "I had this teacher who would come to class late and looking dishevelled. ... Other times I would ask for his lesson plan and he wouldn't have any. I had to speak to him about his unprofessional behaviour." Therefore, to Benson, professionalism was closely tied to teachers personal appearance and teachers being prompt and ready to teach their assigned classes. The issue of teacher professionalism was echoed by Diane when referring to her school's dress code for female teachers and code of conduct for teachers and by Patrick in reference to teachers acting as a role model to students by modelling professional behaviours.

Transparency and honesty were also related to equitable leadership. In particular, they were identified as desired professional behaviours in relation to stakeholder relationships and school decisions that touched on equity and inclusion. According to Mary, because of complexities associated with equitable leadership, "individuals must be transparent and honest when dealing with colleagues and students... otherwise they will not produce." In terms of individual practices and preferences, Diane noted that equitable

leadership means “I have to be transparent in my decisions and when dealing with teachers and the community.” John explained that “I prefer when people are honest. ... I do the same so that they see the real deal before buying into our school vision. ... You take the chance. It works.” Finally, Patrick observed:

As it is, equitable leadership is new. The only way to bring everyone on board is by being completely honest and transparent. I want them to know that I’m also adjusting to this new way of thinking... really making sure I’m making that effort to be very transparent.

Canadian participants linked professionalism and various dispositions to actions that contributed to school cultures, supported equity and to ensured quality and effectiveness of teaching strategies. Sophia observed that she was

responsible for cultivating a professional culture in the school. ... Everyone is considered a professional. ... I model professionalism when working with teachers on instruction and curriculum issues. ... Bottom line, at the end of the day our teaching methodologies must address student characteristics and needs.

To Julian, “school principals and teachers need to be professional, knowledgeable, and competent... [and] show passion and enthusiasm for equity,” while Matthew noted: “I have to be professional at all times. ... I have to remove any personal bias. So, I use data, assessment results and trends when providing feedback. I’m also specific... that way I focus on improving practice.”

Finally, professionalism was viewed from the perspective of personal appearance and actions in the Canadian context. For example, Peter reported that “I expect my teachers to be professional in all aspects. ... [They] have to be prepared to teach when

they walk into a classroom... be punctual, dress appropriately, and use inclusive language.”

These results show that equitable leadership knowledge drew from ideas related to teaching, management, law, and human rights. Further, it appears that there were many nuances to equitable leadership knowledge and practice. These nuances included a sense that equitable leaders’ professional and interpersonal skills toolkit contained a repertoire of qualities, dispositions, competencies, skills, and knowledge which constituted administrative reality. These realities were expressed in different ways. Kenyan participants focused on skills that were also related to general educational management. Canadian participants, however, were more explicit on how negotiation and community engagement skills were linked to equity and inclusive education goals and aspirations.

Ties That Bind: Knowledge and Institutions

Different pathways existed for connecting equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations among Canadian and Kenyan study participants. The actions that participants took depended on whether they drew upon explicit as opposed to tacit equitable leadership knowledge. Tacit and explicit knowledge were differentiated by Kenyan participants as follows: Diane explained that explicit knowledge referred “knowledge of educational practice acquired from professional development training, teacher training courses and degree programs.” Mercy described explicit knowledge as knowledge acquired during “professional development training, principal induction courses and/or after participation in professional development activities.” Continuing, Mercy posited that explicit knowledge is “knowledge that you need to do your job.” Conversely, tacit knowledge was described by Diane as “knowledge gained from

experience or in practice ... and is only visible in actions ...only comes to light when one sits down and reflects on their actions, especially by thinking through what they have done when solving problems.”

These distinctions between explicit and tacit knowledge were echoed by one Canadian participant, Sophia, as follows:

I think text books is a place to start... although they don't always agree. ... I might add that information about equity and inclusion in our policies ...and handouts from courses and professional development activities are pretty formal. ... I find that a lot of times, I rely on my experience. ... These issues are not new. My colleagues and I have seen them before. ... I am aware of what is contained in Board policies on equity and inclusion in education, expectations and practices that work. ... I guess you can say that that's informal knowledge.

These knowledge distinctions were important and sometimes influenced the steps that participants took to connect equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations.

The data suggests that both Kenyan and Canadian administrators drew upon their prior experiences, common sense, and intuition in the resolution of day-to-day school leadership issues that were connected to expectations and requirements placed on the principalship. Participants indicated that based on years of experience, they made many school decisions without having to explicitly link their knowledge to institutional obligations. Results also show that participants with more years of experience as school administrators and/or equitable leaders used their discretion when handling contradictory equitable leadership issues. However, in complex cases, school administrators from both Kenya and Canada reported that they had to think through and align their knowledge and

processes with institutional expectations. Complex equitable leadership cases were explained as issues individuals had not “dealt with before” by Diane; as “emerging issues within the school community” by Sophia; and as cases where “limited guidelines and supports exist” by Dorothy.

Specifically, participants took three distinct actions to ensure that their knowledge and practice were aligned with institutional obligations: (a) gathering or identifying individual or institutional knowledge, (b) establishing the relative importance of knowledge, and (c) confirming institutional knowledge legitimacy. These actions were both sequential and recursive. These steps were more explicit among Kenyan study participants, whereas from the Canadian context, the actions that participants took to connect equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations were fluid.

Participants offered various reasons for this state of fluidity. For example, Matthew noted that he took different approaches since equity work “is one of those grey areas... each issue is different and sometimes require almost its own set of knowledge and skills.”

Peter on the other hand explained, “I didn’t have to think much because the policies and legislation on equity and inclusive education is clear. ... For the most part, I use knowledge that is considered acceptable, tested, and true.” However, upon further reflection, Canadian participants were able to identify specific actions that individuals need to take to connect explicit equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations. The next section explores these actions, as pathways that school administrators from Kenya and Canada took to connect equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations.

Gathering Knowledge

Participants from Kenya and Canada reported that they gathered knowledge during the process of connecting equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations. According to Kenyan participants, gathering formal/explicit knowledge included activities such as identifying existing information related to the issue, finding out more about the problem and identifying the knowledge requirements or prior precedents. For instance, Diane reported that knowledge gathering took the form of asking “staff for suggestions on skills and teams needed to resolve the issue,” whereas to Mercy it involved “conducting research” to find out if the approaches have been used successfully in other educational contexts.

Some Kenyan participants reported activities such as reflecting on the presenting issue, talking about it and gathering input on possible solutions from their colleagues under knowledge gathering in order to identify informal knowledge that might be needed to resolve the problem. To be precise, Mary, a deputy principal, stated:

When an issue comes up and I know that let’s say it is about teaching and should be handled by myself in a certain way, I will make the call on what approaches to take and talk about the decision with the principal. ... I already knew what to do, I just wanted to make sure that the principal also felt the same way.

Giving an example involving student discipline, Mercy, another deputy principal, explained:

The disciplinary team [deputy principals are members of the disciplinary team] would brainstorm on a course of action to present to the principal. ... First we review what we have done before to address similar issues and then check to see

if those ideas are aligned with the new requirements. ... This process can be frustrating and make people think we don't know how to run a school.

From the foregoing, deputy principals were faced with a layer of consultation and had to report back to their principals in relation to knowledge gathering activities.

The reasons for gathering knowledge were varied. For example, John indicated that he gathered knowledge because "I want to understand what the issue is, how it can be resolved and if I really understand what is expected of me." Mary noted, "I need to ask myself where I can find the information... or if I have correctly interpreted the policies and procedures I need to use for this problem." Mercy explained that

the moment I encounter an educational issue, I review the issue and listen to both parties. ... This helps to confirm the educational importance of the issue and whether I have the knowledge needed or I have to look elsewhere for support.

By gathering information Patrick reported that "I am able to clarify if it is a real [equity] issue before deciding on which policy or regulation to use."

Tying knowledge gathering to equity and inclusive education policies, Mercy noted, "we don't have clear rules on the subject one has to gather as much information as possible regarding what to do from our laws, education Act, and the Children's Act."

Mary noted that it was important to gather information and to be aware of all policies and procedures "when the matter is new, strange, difficult... or if someone will question your decision." She also stated that this step helped her to identify "information and processes in place" that were needed to accomplish a task or equity and inclusive education goals.

Expressing similar sentiments, Diane reported that knowledge gathering helped her to "understand the issue before deciding on the knowledge or skills needed."

Turning to the Canadian context, knowledge gathering occurred when Canadian study participants identified or referred to existing information related to the equity and inclusive education. For instance, in an access issue for a student with mental health concerns, Sophia shared the following:

As I contemplated what we should do or need to do to address the issue, the first thing that came to mind was that I had to check what our school board policy says about mental health issues. ... It is important that I know all the policies.

On a teaching and learning matter, Peter stated:

We use a strength-based framework when developing plans for our severely at-risk students. ... My first step is to consult the teacher. ... I must first and identify the main issue and what strengths this student brings to the table before signing off or agreeing to specific student action plans.

Similarly, on a teaching and learning challenge, Dorothy indicated:

I think about this [equity policy] a lot. The expectation to include students with learning abilities in regular classrooms is challenging for teachers. I know what the policy expects but want to ignore it because what happens in the classroom is so different. ... Inclusion is sometimes impossible with the students that we have.

In terms of gathering implicit knowledge, Sophia indicated “I base my decisions on what is the true practice or experience of staff or what we do on a day to day basis.”

Julian shared that “much of what I do as a successful leader is instinctive. It’s not easy to put that into words, but very easy to put it into action once an equity issue arises.”

However, Julian also indicated that

I reflect on my theories of practice, what I know about the issue and similar actions I have taken in the past...where I've heard of similar incidents. I'm regularly in contact with other principals... [to] find out what my peers have done to resolve similar issues.

Continuing, Julian explained that by reflecting on past actions and ideas, "I mentally confirm my ideas and thoughts" and gather knowledge in preparation for addressing the issue. Similarly, Peter's assertions that he always consulted teachers, reflects a process of gathering information about implicit knowledge before confirming knowledge to be used in the resolution of complex equity issues.

Therefore, the act of gathering knowledge helped participants to identify accepted knowledge and to connect their actions to institutional ways of resolving similar issues. Knowledge gathering revolved around mental processes for linking institutional texts, procedures, and strategies to equity and inclusive education in Kenya and Canada.

Establishing the Relative Importance of Knowledge

Participants from Kenya and Canada undertook actions that enabled them to establish the relative importance of equitable leadership knowledge. Starting with results from Kenya, participants reported that they reviewed existing institutional texts, consulted with colleagues and undertook benchmarking activities when establishing the relative importance of knowledge. Patrick reported that he established equitable leadership knowledge importance through review of "policies or procedures that must be incorporated or those related to the educational issue." Diane stated, "I reviewed legislation, Ministry regulations and policy pieces to ensure my actions do not contradict them... especially if it is an emerging educational issue or if I think that there might be

stakeholder uproar.” Mercy noted that “when resolving contested or emerging equitable leadership issues, one must establish their own knowledge, what the school expects, and then decide if there is a match before taking action.”

Benchmarking activities and consultations with colleagues helped participants to establish the relative importance of knowledge. Diane reported that because benchmarking activities involved “reviewing practices with other schools...[they] helped me to establish my own knowledge and formal knowledge requirements ... [and] enabled me to reflect on knowledge acquired through professional development activities and to identify what I could draw upon.” She also noted that

benchmarking activities bring together individuals with different skill sets, such as those trained in educational counselling or external experts. ... The process [benchmarking] helps the team to confirm, and establish required knowledge. ... You can imagine that some of these issues can be difficult and many of us have not handled such cases. ... That is why I was telling you, it is really up to us to learn ... you have to read a lot in the literature because nobody trains you.

Mercy posited that during benchmarking meetings they reviewed “emerging literature since our current knowledge might be outdated.”

Benchmarking activities and meetings also enabled administrators to share information and identify new knowledge requirements. Patrick reported that they established “new requirements during meetings when school heads, the TSC, the Ministry of Education, and educational experts jointly put their ideas together” to address educational issues. John confirmed that meetings and benchmarking activities helped him to “establish knowledge needed and to align my knowledge with the knowledge of my

colleagues.” Diane posited that through meetings and benchmarking activities, she was able to “gather information on shared knowledge or those that represent common perspectives.”

Results also show that the processes for establishing knowledge importance focused on the communities of practice among Kenyan participants. For example, Mary, reported that on two student discipline cases, she informally consulted a few colleagues in order to establish and confirm that planned actions were acceptable. Patrick shared a case where he asked for feedback from the Board of Management on a student discipline issue where an entire Form Four (Grade 12) class risked suspension due to perceived complicity in the bullying of junior students. In Patrick’s case, he used staff and board level meetings to establish key knowledge and decision processes. More so, Patrick noted that in such cases, once knowledge and a resolution path were identified they established knowledge importance in decisions reached “through agreement rather than by majority vote amongst my staff.” He also indicated that

all decisions that require policy change or those that impact our external school community we make through majority vote rather than by agreement at the board of management level. ... Once approved, board decisions become official school records that can only be changed by the Board or changed through Ministry directives.

Expressing similar sentiments, John and Mary reported that communities of practice were instrumental in establishing the relative importance of knowledge. Continuing, John stated that tacit knowledge that was established and confirmed at the board of management level became institutional “reference points when things do not go well.”

Additionally, establishing knowledge importance helped participants like Patrick, to “know what [knowledge] other principals are adapting for their contexts.”

Turning to the Canadian context, Canadian participants also identified establishing the relative importance of knowledge as a necessary action when connecting equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations. Specific activities included reviewing institutional texts and narrowing down options when establishing knowledge importance. For example, in complex matters Canadian participants reported that they reviewed various institutional texts in order to establish knowledge needed and to identify knowledge that could be used to resolve equitable leadership issues. As Sophia put it, “I had to review literature plus look at what’s available online to establish the knowledge that’s available...[and] ensure that my idea is aligned with other ideas for resolving access and equity for students with mental health issues.” Continuing, she explained,

I went on to Government of Ontario websites to find out what they indicate is the standard and should be included in a policy. ... I also contacted other principal colleagues regarding policies or practices they have in place that I can review so I don’t have to reinvent the wheel.

Sophia also reported that she “looked to the AODA [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005] and the human rights code and other legislative standards on what to be addressed” in the resolution of the matter.

Using a student discipline case to illustrate how he established the relative importance of knowledge, Matthew reported that prior to making a final decision, “I reviewed the school Code of Conduct and policy related to student discipline... and although my experience having resolved a similar issue was important, I still had to

reconfirm.” On an instructional matter, Peter stated that he had to “look at curriculum outcomes... and used curriculum information to develop an individualized plan which helped this student meet some outcome expectations.”

From a practice perspective, Canadian participants reported that prioritizing knowledge helped them to establish the importance of specific knowledge for resolving equity and inclusive education issues. For instance, Julian indicated that he had to establish which of the “ideas were workable or applicable.” Sophia noted,

having experienced the same thing at my old school, I provided some ideas and agreed with the staff on what should be done. ... At the staff meeting, it was decided that staff needed to communicate messages to students in a clear manner... regarding equity, discrimination, and what the school is doing to implement the policies.

Dorothy explained that “we narrowed down the ideas down to two... [and the] team explored these ideas in detail. ... We discussed the pros and cons of each of the ideas.” In other words, narrowing down which ideas to use helped to establish participants’ tacit knowledge, establish the importance of the knowledge, and share tacit knowledge.

Confirming Institutional Knowledge Legitimacy

The third explicit action that participants from Kenya and Canada took to connect equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations was confirming knowledge legitimacy. For Kenyan participants, knowledge confirmation occurred through reflecting on their actions, reviewing planned equitable leadership actions and/or reviewing past actions taken related to equity issues. For example, Mercy explained that,

Once you take action, you must monitor others' reactions. You must monitor how it is implemented to ensure that it is aligned with original goal of your action... you must evaluate your actions to ensure that it has resulted in desired outcomes, confirm if it was the best choice you could make... since we are never 100% sure or that it [action] is aligned with educational beliefs and values.

Patrick concurred. He noted that "you monitor and evaluate your actions to make sure that your actions are ethical ... since your actions teach you a lot about yourself, your values, and what is important to the institution."

Canadian participants confirmed knowledge legitimacy through interactions with regulatory bodies and by reflecting on their actions. According to Sophia, checking with the regulatory bodies before implementation helped to "confirm that we have the right knowledge and that planned actions and strategies are aligned with our policies." In addition to thinking through prior actions, Sophia explained that she also "creates guidelines" to ensure documentary evidence. Julian reported, "I review and collect supporting documentation" to ensure planned actions were supported by the school community. Illustrating the importance of confirming knowledge legitimacy, Matthew stated that

sometimes you have to go on a limb for a student. ... At that point you have to make sure that the knowledge you are using can be backed somewhere, like new research or be prepared to defend your options. ... Sometimes your best bet is to follow laid down procedures.

Results also show that confirmation of knowledge legitimacy prior to taking actions helped to resolve inherent uncertainties that Canadian participants associated with

equitable leadership decisions. Explaining these inherent uncertainties and complexities in a student discipline case where he drew from explicit knowledge, the board's Zero Tolerance Policy, Matthew indicated:

Sometimes it is impossible to know how things will turn out... even when you follow rules you can cause harm. ... I mean by treating everyone the same or overprotecting one group, right... but if your actions are aligned with Board expectations... at least you'll know the Board will back you up if you follow protocols. ... I have to create a safe and conducive school environment by having consistent expectations on all my students... [or] people will think that I am not holding this student accountable for his actions.

Julian concurred with Matthew's assertions regarding the complexities of equitable leadership. However, he reiterated the importance of following established rules and institutional expectations during the resolution of equity and inclusive education issues. Peter noted that within communities of practice, the use of legitimate institutional knowledge and accepted professional knowledge ensures that "everyone knows you are playing by the book" when addressing contested equity issues. Matthew also reiterated that the use of legitimate institutional knowledge ensures that "you are on track."

In summary, Kenyan and Canadian participants took three explicit actions to ensure their equitable leadership knowledge and actions were connected to educational expectations, stakeholder expectations, and practices of fellow principals. These actions were: (a) gathering knowledge, (b) establishing the relative importance of knowledge, and (c) confirming knowledge legitimacy. These actions show that equitable leadership knowledge and practices are closely linked with institutional texts and obligations. The

following section explores findings related to challenges associated with this close connection between equitable leadership knowledge and institutional obligations.

Equitable Leadership Policy and Practice Challenges

The results of this study show that equitable leadership knowledge was closely intertwined with educational policies, rules, and regulations in both Kenya and Canada. Because of these linkages, knowledge associated with equitable leadership and its practice can present challenges. This section presents the participants' perspectives on equitable leadership challenges that arose out of policy imperatives and knowledge concepts such as shared leadership and equitable outcomes.

Policy Directives and Equitable Leadership

Many equitable leadership knowledge ideas were rooted in regulatory processes that were presented as policy directives, rules, and sanctions. For instance, one Kenyan participant (Mary) argued that the knowledge ideas that inform equity and inclusive education “are passed to schools, and the schools are supposed to implement these policies as required by the Ministry or by the employer [Teachers Service Commission].” However, participants noted that some policies that were supposed to lead to greater access for students presented equity challenges and were described as unsuitable in some context. For example, Mary described challenges created by one-size-fits all policies when applied to all environments:

Schools differ in terms of context, every school has a different setting... but the Ministry sometimes does not see schools in terms of whichever decisions are made there. ... Policies are generated from the Ministry and you are supposed to

implement irrespective of local context. It is assumed that all policies work and should be followed to the letter.

Other participants concurred. They indicated that the policies that presented equitable leadership challenges included the school fees policy, school re-entry policy, and policies and laws that inform student discipline practices.

Kenyan participants expressed additional concerns regarding the proposed Ministry of Education policy on school fees which was intended to ensure greater access for students by having schools charge the same amount of fees, irrespective of the school's location or designation. For example, John noted that the new policy would "increase inequity and reduce access for students living in poverty." Diane argued that the policy would increase inequity because it advocated the "same treatment of schools irrespective of contextual issues." According to Patrick, the policy presented personal and professional risks for principals who failed to collect required fees.

The reasons for these sentiments were threefold. First, Diane, John, and Patrick explained that the new fee policy will lead to a fee increase for students from 37,000 shillings per year to 60,000 shillings per year for her students, which would result in increased inequity. John argued that because the policy did not seem to take into account local circumstances and assumed that all students could pay fees, it would contribute to inequitable access for students already struggling to pay fees. In Benson's case, the policy would contribute to inequity since "a large category of parents in our schools cannot pay fees. ... The issue of poverty is so deeply rooted." Expressing similar sentiments, Patrick explained that "there are some areas [communities] where poverty is such a big issue. By increasing school fees, it means that local communities will not

access local institutions and cannot pay fees for their children to study in their jurisdiction.” In Diane’s words, “the net result of this policy will be inequity as opposed to educational equity it was meant to address in the first place.”

Second, some schools were already feeling the burden of educating students living in poverty and had implemented strategies to keep these students in school. For instance, Benson’s school had established a

fee levy that will support students who are weak financially. ... Every student is levied 1,000 shillings [Kenya shillings] so that at the end of the year we have in our kitty around 100,000 shillings which now goes to the students. ... So even if this student does not pay fees, we have something in our kitty to boost our financial status.

Mary indicated that her school routinely helped students living in poverty by linking them up with financiers and sponsor groups. These sentiments were succinctly captured in Diane’s assertion that “increasing school fees in such communities or increasing school fees indiscriminately as this policy directive stipulate limits access.”

A third equitable leadership challenge according to John emanated from the perspective that, by dictating a fee amount for all schools, this policy treated schools as if “all schools have same infrastructure and therefore should charge the same fee amount.” Explaining, Patrick noted that

the fee charged depends on so many things. ... At times you increase fees because you want to develop facilities to run the school. That’s why you increase fees. So if somebody already has those facilities and you want to increase fees and the parents are used to a particular rate, then the parents will withdraw their children.

Patrick further argued that many schools in poor areas charge lower fees. In his view, student enrollments in such schools would decline if the fee went up. Additionally, the new fee structure would present challenges since school leaders would be forced to find alternative ways to ensure access to education for students who cannot pay school fees.

Similarly, the Ministry of Education's Re-Entry Policy informed equitable leadership knowledge because of its intent to ensure access to education for female students. Mercy reported that according to the Re-entry policy,

a student who gets pregnant during the course of her studies must be kept in school until such a time that she leaves to deliver the baby. Yet, when she is kept in school the rest of the students are sent the message that this behaviour is okay. Some students will also ridicule the pregnant student. ... For some students, if they want to stay in school they procure an abortion. It is a moral decay.

Despite the policy's intent, participants noted challenges implementing this policy. For example, Mercy stated:

The school is supposed to provide counselling and support to pregnant students. ... [And] counsel other students to accept pregnant students. So, how do you ensure that other students follow rules and do not fall into the same trap? We don't even have enough teachers. Now how can we afford a counsellor for this girl?

Mary argued that with the Re-entry Policy, "students know that they can come back to the same school after giving birth... so there is no need for moral discipline."

Fundamentally, she contended that this policy sent the message that it was "okay for female students to get pregnant but still know that they have a right to education or that we will give them another chance." Thus, at the heart of these challenges were individual

rights and policy-driven knowledge concepts that were considered unsuitable, immoral, and inconsistent with educational values.

Finally, student discipline and related policies presented equitable leadership challenges for Canadian and Kenyan participants. In particular, Kenyan participants reported that student discipline was critical to the attainment of positive outcomes. According to Mercy, “when a student is not disciplined, you waste a lot of time talking instead of teaching. It interferes with content delivery and eventually the quality of teaching and learning.” Other participants also claimed that some policies and legislation that inform equitable leadership ideas related to student discipline were counterproductive. Specifically, Mary claimed that

the Children’s Act and Children’s Rights legislations have aggravated discipline in schools. ... The students are concerned about their rights more than their roles. They know too well about their rights, they want to be provided with certain things, done for certain things, but they are not performing or observing their roles like being obedient. ... They are concentrating so much on, it is my right to do this, this is my right, what should be done for me. If it is done in a different way, they say NO.

Mercy posited that the policies contributed to scenarios where “students are undisciplined, because they know the teachers’ hands are tied. They cannot do anything about them, they [students] have rights.” Patrick explained:

The policies are clear on what should not be done and enforces zero tolerance on corporal punishment. However, our experience indicates that corporal punishment ensures faster, effective, and culturally expected compliance to school rules. ...

This policy wants us to use guidance and counseling. Yet most schools cannot afford these professionals. ... Indiscipline is rampant and our hands are tied.

Indirectly, according to participants such as Mary, “these Ministry Guidelines on discipline are actually a threat... emerging from an external force. In fact it scuttles your efforts. It contradicts what the context requires” and compromised student outcomes.

According to Canadian participants, the practice of educational administration left very little room to disagree with many of the policies related to equity and inclusion in education. These policies guided administrative actions. In fact, Sophia reiterated that it is important to have clear policies and procedures in place. The policies are a starting point to help guide you in resolving a conflict. Understanding your community (staff, students, and families) is a benefit in addressing conflicts and issues. It is important to connect with the teachers and families in your community. By doing this you help bridge understanding between the school and community and can resolve equity issues in a positive manner.

However, equitable leadership challenges related to policy existed. Matthew, for instance spoke about the use of Zero Tolerance policy to address behaviour issues that could be resolved other ways with less impact on the student. Continuing, he noted that “as administrators we might suspend a student as per stipulations contained in the Zero tolerance policy, however we question their efficacy and fairness.” Julian also identified discipline policies as problematic. According to him,

a Code of Conduct is established that adheres to what is written in the Education Act, addressed in board policies, and communicated to students through a school handbook. ... The rules are straightforward and the consequences clear... [but]

depending on interpretation of Statutory Powers and Procedures Act, these consequences are often challenged.

Furthermore, Julian noted that through the same Statutory Powers and Procedures Act, “many parents will hire an advocate or even a lawyer to challenge a long term suspension or an expulsion. ... The principal must be prepared for this.”

Challenges With Knowledge Ideas: Shared Leadership

Shared leadership, as an equitable leadership knowledge concept presented challenges. Starting with the Kenyan context, one participant (Patrick) argued that the underlying intent of equitable leadership as shared leadership is that “if a decision is shared, it is owned by everyone from the ground up and everyone supports the idea.” However, John reported that “when teams are successful, everyone is happy but with failure comes finger pointing and leaders bear the blame.” In terms of application of equitable leadership as shared leadership, Patrick indicated that

you cannot run the school as envisaged in all the agreements that you have reached with staff. ... In as much as we have collective responsibility... where the team should take the blame, other people have an opportunity not to be blamed.

Explaining further, he noted that

when your school is not doing well in national exams, you can find the whole community ganging up and demanding that you must go. ... At times you are just attacked verbally and physically as you walk in the streets. They say that you are wasting their institution and wasting their children. ... They forget that they are part of the school leadership. Everything is blamed on you.

John concurred with these assertions regarding collective responsibility:

The community will always say the school is the principal when things are not working well. But when things are working well, they talk about our school... when the academic standards are improving, no student unrest, everything is organized, they talk about our school. But when things are chaotic, it is the principal. Blame is not shared.

Commenting on the link between school structure and shared leadership, Mary noted

We have a particular management structure of a school. ... When you talk about shared leadership, there are things which according to the structure when we adopt from the Ministry of Education as a policy, cannot be shared. There's no way of sharing. ... Each officer has a particular area of responsibility. Like the departmental heads do entirely different things from what a deputy does. The deputy is responsible for certain roles, different from those of the principal. ... While sharing is encouraged, accountability rests with one.

Similarly, Canadian participants expressed challenges with equitable leadership as shared leadership. Although shared leadership is an expressed value in Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, Julian was still resistant, stating that

it must be remembered that the principal is the leader in the school with total responsibility for everything that goes on in their school 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Sharing leadership is not easy and the principal must know when and how to do it. ... All groups don't have a say in everything that takes place in a school. Budgets, discipline, health and safety are examples of areas where there is little opportunity for achieving consensus. ... The budget is set by the Board, the

Education Act defines what is unacceptable behaviour and the allowable consequences. ... They must be adhered to as directed.

In an example involving teaching matters for exceptional students, Julian indicated:

I shared my leadership with the teacher whose responsibility it was to manage this program. However, it was I who signed all of the official documents and should there be gross errors, I was responsible. In this case I shared my leadership, but the sole responsibility is something that could not be shared.

Sophia, on the other hand, noted,

first off, equitable leadership in the school system can be a very contradictory term. As a school principal, you strive to work in teamwork and collaboration with staff, students, families and administration but policies and union contracts can impede what you as an individual would like to achieve in your school.

In an example on shared decision-making, Sophia explained that although

you have power in your school to make decisions, these decisions may not be shared or even accepted as equitable by students, families or teachers. ... When parents meet with a principal to discuss a concern they have with a teacher, parents indicate that the resolution is not always in the best interest of the student, and that what is being protected is the interest of the teacher. ... The teachers and the union take an opposing view... [and] such decisions aren't always shared.

From the foregoing, Canadian and Kenyan participants experienced challenges with equitable leadership as shared leadership. These challenges arose when individuals did not equally share in taking responsibilities for team decisions, where educational structures constrained sharing, and/or where stakeholders had different interests.

Equitable Educational Outcomes and Standardized Assessments

Embedded in equitable leadership knowledge concepts were accountability ideas related to access and outcomes. Evidence shows that a common outcomes indicator in Kenyan educational system is the placement/ranking of students and schools based on performance in standardized tests. Similar examples in Ontario is student performance in Ontario Secondary Schools Literacy Test (OSSLT) and EQAO tests. The expectations that underlie these practices is the use of a common assessment framework to measure student performance. In tandem with these assessment frameworks is the selection of students to the various courses based on their performance in exams and assessments. Kenyan participants identified four equitable leadership challenges related to assessment frameworks and student outcomes.

First, the assessment frameworks and criteria for success presented equitable leadership challenges by using a flawed system to enrol and compare schools and students. For example, Diane explained that

at the time of entry into schools, students are selected as per their performance in the primary level of education, KCPE [Kenya Certificate of primary Education]. Now, after taking the top students to the national schools, then you take the average one to the county schools, and then those that are below average are taken to the sub-county schools. At the end of the day, these schools are meant to compete at the same level.

According to John, some schools admit students who have “literally failed in prior exams and therefore their ability to excel in this educational environment is questionable.”

Reflecting on the performance of schools based a flawed admission, Diane questioned how a county school could perform better than a national school:

You take a school, Precious [pseudonym], it has been the top school in this country for the last few years. And, would it be naturally possible that it can work? ... Even though Precious does not admit top performing students. So, when you even go to the bottom root of this issue, to me it is very, very artificial how they do that [continually perform better].

Patrick posited:

Good students are admitted to national schools, whereas county and sub-county schools take the rest of the students. Yet, when it comes to the national exams at the end of Form Four, the same criteria, which is performance in national exams is used to rank schools despite the differences in resource allocation and type of students admitted in the first place.

Therefore, according to Patrick, the current educational system in Kenya “stratifies students” through this school allocation system. Expressing similar sentiments, Diane posited that while the “teacher is implementing the curriculum on the course work that is already pre-designed... an unfair system of student allocation to national, county, and sub-county schools” ensures they fail.

Second, the participants indicated that assessment approaches and constant comparison of schools presented an equitable leadership issue. For instance, Patrick argued that these practices compromised “the quality of education by making education exam oriented as opposed to knowledge oriented. ... We do a lot of drilling so as to get these students to pass exams.” According to Diane, this approach to education “removed

their schools' focus from real education that should take place and in the process is undoing, in a big way, our standards and the quality of education offered... even the quality of the learners.” Diane also noted that with the focus on nation-wide assessments,

everyone is being judged on their performance on one exam. So, it puts a lot of pressure on the learner because they would like to get a good certificate. So, people go for whatever means that is available to ensure that learners perform well in exams. ... It makes learning very stressful for students.

Mercy argued that these assessment practices have led to an “unfortunate situation in Kenya where quality education and the opportunities for further studies are measured by the kind of paper you get... whether it is A or E.”

Commenting on the impact of these assessment practices on teaching and learning, Benson reported that the assessment approaches and ranking of schools and students led to “increased competition amongst schools.” Concurring, Diane posited that

the system of our schooling... unnecessarily creates competition to the extent that even nursery school kids go for tuition because the parent wants the child to be the best. And all of us are competing for our children to go to the national schools.

Explaining how increased competition impacted teaching, Patrick noted that to succeed,

a competitive mindset must be widely shared within their school. ... Individuals within their schools must understand that student performance in national exams is primary evidence of educational and teaching success... [and] must understand that their school success is closely linked to their national ranking based on students' performance.

In John's opinion, the competition causes schools to focus exclusively on "preparing students for the exams in the final year of schooling." Concurring, Diane stated that

most schools complete Year 12 curriculum by Year 11. Others cover an entire year's curriculum in 3 to 4 months. In some schools, students do not sleep well.

At 4:00 a.m. students are already in class and the teachers are teaching or exam drilling. They are taught late into the night, up to 11:00 p.m. Over the weekend,

teachers are in school, they are teaching... at night some teachers are supposed to be in class. ...Without that, you will not manage the competition.

Another participant (Benson) reported that teachers were given a "time frame or when to complete the syllabus. So it is upon this teacher to get free time to cover up the syllabus."

Benson suggested that in order to ensure compliance, the administrative team's role was to

monitor syllabus coverage in order to stay on top of what the students are taught in class to ensure that it contributed to their schools overall success. ... We

routinely check notes of both teachers and students. The teacher will check notes of the students. Myself, the Deputy Principal and the Head of Department will

check teachers' notes and check students' notes to ensure they tally.

Benson mentioned additional strategies used to ensure teacher compliance:

All the teachers go to a hotel where we have drinks. ... You will find them

speaking amongst themselves, talking to each other, pointing out weaknesses and

strengths of the teachers. So you know when somebody's mistakes have been

pointed out for them, he feels he is isolated and he definitely comes to the fold.

Patrick reported that his school put in place a reward system for top performing teachers'

and classes by giving a "token compensation depending on the money we have in our

kitty.” According to Benson, “We reward the best class after every exam... we reward the best class by giving them sodas to drink and financially we give the teacher KES1,000 as a top performing class. That will encourage the teacher to work hard.” Diane confirmed these practices, noting that in this competitive environment, “the teacher in Kenya is not one who is paid because they work the normal 9 hours. No, they do more than that” for a token compensation decided upon by the school.

Third, the pressure to perform well in national exams contributed to increased exam irregularities. Patrick reported “rampant cheating in national exams where some schools do whatever it takes to make their students pass the exams.” Diane spoke of scenarios where “parents do everything it takes even if it means buying the exams for their children in order to get good exam results.” Mary reported cases where “students use social media to share exam questions at least 2 hours before the exams.” School principals and teachers were also complicit in exam irregularities. Patrick reported that because “individual and school reputations are at stake there is a lot of irregularities and heads are forced to get involved.” According to John, it was not uncommon to see

school principals and teachers running around trying to lay their hands on exam papers, often paying exorbitant amounts of money to get exam papers prior to national exams. ... Schools and students will resort to any available option, oftentimes illegal, in order to improve individual and school performance.

Relating these irregularities to teaching practices, John noted that

unlike in the past where teaching ended once exams started, now you find that teachers are revising with their students throughout the exam period and between exam sessions, especially if they receive information on questions on the actual

exam paper or have access to what they believe is the exam paper. They see it as a way of preparing their students, of providing them with everything it takes to pass the exams, and of improving their schools performance in exams.

Another participant, Mary, summed up the situation as follows: “schools literally do everything for the students to ensure your schools’ mean is good. ... You do anything to achieve good results without worrying about educational consequences for students.”

Finally, the high student failure rate in national exams presented an equitable leadership challenge. For example, Diane posited “despite most schools teaching to the test, many students still fail.” In an attempt to explain the phenomenon, Diane revealed that students were failing because of “inadequate staffing especially if the school is located in areas where the parents are not well endowed. ... They [schools] cannot provide the necessary learning facilities. ... Students in such schools cannot compete with their counterparts.” According to Patrick, when “the school and the government cannot employ enough trained teachers to ensure adequate staffing as per curriculum based evaluations or school enrolment” few students will do well in the exams.

Student failure was also attributed to poor school leadership. For instance, Mercy argued that “schools that have good leaders... automatically perform well. If leadership is poor, the schools do not perform well. So the success of the students eventually commensurate with the type of leadership in that school.” Diane also noted that

some school leaders to begin with, are not prepared for their main responsibility, that is staff development. The staffing is so critical, the government is not able to cope very much with the demands. ... Students in schools that do not invest in teachers professional development tend to fail.

Although there is no consensus on why many students fail in Kenyan schools, these results confirm that equitable leaders in Kenya face many challenges to equity and inclusion in education, including a fundamental challenge related to student outcomes.

Canadian findings also reveal equitable leadership challenges that were tied to standardized assessments. According to Sophia, “the OSSLT and EQAO are based on accumulative learning in our school system, if you have not attended elementary school in Ontario these tests already put you at a disadvantage.” In addition, she noted that

in my experience, teachers typically teach to the test during assessment years so that the overall student score will be high. ... This is a waste of the school year. We should focus on core curriculum and address the emerging learning needs of our students. ... A school that has more resources and lower numbers of ESL learners tend to score well on EQAO tests. ... How can comparing schools be a valid tool?.

Elaborating on how newcomer students are disadvantaged, Sophia stated that

newcomer students are starting the test at unfair disadvantage. If the schools want to be equitable, they need to use effective and creative approaches to introduce and discuss topics. ... The literacy test does not promote critical thinking... or demonstrate a student’s true [knowledge]. ... It is a tool for school administrators.

Julian presented another perspective that allowed him to subvert the system by exempting some students he classified as exceptional from the test. He indicated that,

based on my experience as a principal, my studies involving assessment and my knowledge of Ministry of Education policies, where a student is considered exceptional, the Ministry of Education has a policy regarding exceptional

students. All students with exceptionalities can be exempt from writing all forms of system-wide assessment. To include them would skew the results and not give an accurate representation of the students being assessed. Before a student can be exempted a determination must be made as to their ability to write the test.

Continuing, Julian argued that in cases where students are not considered exceptional but needed accommodation “a record was made of those students who needed special accommodation such as additional time, scribing or having the questions read to them.”

In summary, study findings indicate different entry points and conceptual underpinnings to equitable leadership. Additionally, equitable leadership was associated with ideas such as shared and inclusive leadership; equal access, and equitable outcomes. It was also rooted in educational leadership ideas and institutional texts related to equity, human rights, and inclusion. Because of the institutional undertones to some knowledge concepts, participants took explicit steps to connect equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations. Furthermore, at the heart of equitable leadership challenges were equity and inclusive educational goals. Therefore, even when participants perceived that institutionally sanctioned practices led to inequity for certain groups, they still felt personally and professionally liable out of fear of professional sanctions. The next chapter discusses these findings and the implications for theory, research, and practice.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the influence of institutional factors on Kenyan and Canadian school principals' constructions of equitable leadership knowledge and practice. A secondary purpose of the study was to develop theory on the processes that school principals use to link institutional imperatives to their constructions of equitable leadership knowledge and practice. Thus, a subsequent interpretive analysis explored how ideological and theoretical constructs that organize social life constrained and influenced school administrator's equitable leadership knowledge constructions and the steps they took to link equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations. The study used a constructivist grounded theory approach within a qualitative design (Charmaz, 2011). Eleven school principals' participated in the study.

This chapter discusses the findings and presents implications of these findings. The discussion is organized using the study's conceptual framework while simultaneously focusing attention on the major themes that emerged during data analysis. Where applicable, results from specific jurisdictions are compared. The chapter outlines how participants made sense of equitable leadership by exploring how equitable leadership knowledge emerged in relation to changing institutional, regulative, and practice contexts in Kenya and Canada. Attention then turns to specific (a) constitutive and regulative rules that influenced equitable leadership knowledge, (b) equitable leadership assumptions that were widely shared; and (c) individual constructions of equity and inclusive education imperatives that were applicable in Kenya and Canada. In this section, contradictions and challenges associated with these equitable leadership concepts are also discussed. Thereafter, the steps for connecting equitable leadership to

institutional obligations, including a proposed theory that is applicable in both jurisdictions is presented. The chapter concludes by outlining implications of these findings and sharing the researcher's personal learning and thoughts.

Making Sense of Equitable Leadership

Equitable leadership knowledge is nested in intersecting and interlocking networks of relationships that reflect sanctioned ways for addressing equity and inclusion in education. At the intersection of these relationships lie the cultural-cognitive institutional pillar that stress the “central role played by socially mediated construction of a common framework of meanings.” (Scott, 2013, p. 70). Anderson (1990) reminds us that meaning making “as the primary role of school administrators involves the legitimization of dominant constructions of organizational and social reality” (p. 38). In essence, how school principals made sense of equitable leadership was related to a “larger generalized complex of social relations” (Smith, 1987, p. 156).

When I compared Kenyan and Canadian participant responses, the results showed that although there were discernible differences based on the length of time participants had been exposed to equity and inclusive education ideas, institutional pillars helped to shape their construction of equitable leadership meanings. For instance, equitable leadership knowledge emerged as a result of corresponding changes in regulations and educational norms, and when participants dealt with new or emerging equity and inclusive education issues. For instance, constitutional changes in Kenya played an important role in the emergence of equitable leadership by reinforcing shared and inclusive knowledge concepts. The Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy also outlined knowledge expectations, such as shared and inclusive leadership that informed

equitable leadership. Finally, in both jurisdictions, equitable leadership knowledge and shared meanings were mediated by underlying goals of education and international instruments, such as the UNDHR. These concepts are explored in detail below.

Developing Cognition: Equitable Leadership Knowledge Emergence

Knowledge emerges from numerous dynamic cognitive processes, including those that are tied to social interactions (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). Anthropologists and social theorists, for example, have argued for decades that knowledge emerges from subjective human interpretation and complex social interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Stacey, 2000). New knowledge also emerges as a result of internal interpretive processes that assume taken-for-granted status when other actions are not conceivable (Tomic & Kingma, 1996). In the case of equitable leadership, institutional texts related to equity, inclusion, and educational leadership practices contributed to knowledge emergence. For example, educational equity in Canada is framed in institutional texts through the lens of individual rights to education and defined as a “condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, p. ii). Similarly, educational equity is framed through the lens of individual rights to education and to fair treatment in the Kenyan constitution and the Children’s Act. From these institutional texts, participants were able to infer that the knowledge that informs equitable leadership and equity in education rest on a value system that incorporates principles of social justice and co-exists with ideas such as human rights, fairness, and equality. These institutional texts, as constitutive frameworks (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Scott, 2013), construct equity and inclusive practices as possibilities and locate participant experiences at the center of equitable leadership knowledge. Fundamentally, the idea that participants

inferred meanings from institutional texts confirms that new knowledge can emerge out of subjective interpretations of institutional texts and can be precipitated by new institutional texts, such as, the constitution of Kenya of 2010 and the Ontario equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

Individuals develop narratives and explanations which enable them to participate in the habits and customs of their institutions (Larochelle, 1999). Knowledge emergence can also be precipitated by new rules or when ambiguous organizational situations arise (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). Along the same lines, constructions of equitable leadership knowledge and practices as equitable outcomes, access, equity, and inclusion emerged out of participant interpretations of their social and professional reality. From the Canadian context, participants related educational ends such as ensuring equitable outcomes for all students irrespective of race, ethnicity, social status, and abilities to equitable leadership knowledge. Likewise, Kenyan participants related equitable leadership to access to education. These interpretations included meanings associated with educational leadership, educational ends, and inclusive education that were contained in institutional texts such as the constitution, the Education Act, Ontario Human Rights Code, and equity and inclusive education policies, among others, or what can be understood as “shared logics of action” (Scott, 2013, p. 60). The reason participants linked their narratives to educational ends and wider social relations was twofold. First, equitable leadership occurred within a community of practice, which impose constraints on individual behaviours while sanctioning acceptable practices (Scott, 2013). Therefore, equitable leadership knowledge, such as shared and inclusive leadership, access, and equitable outcomes had to reflect shared understanding. Second

knowledge had to reflect expectations related to educational ends held by communities of practice since they represent powerful actors who legitimize knowledge and practice and who are mandated to enforce compliance in both Kenya and Canada.

Extrapolating from Larochelle's (1999) assertion that institutional reality is a product of intersubjective social constructions, what participants considered as rational equitable leadership knowledge within a community of practice, such as the ideas contained in institutional texts in Kenya and Canada, were in reality a natural by-product of shared understanding and culturally supported interpretation of a particular educational context, text, and social life. Consequently, much of what is observed and understood as objective equitable leadership knowledge "suffers from subjectivity and context dependency of knowledge" (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 5). Even where explicit equitable leadership knowledge is still in its infancy or where there was limited contextual information, equitable leadership knowledge is still influenced by subjective interpretations of "maxims, morals, proverbial nuggets of wisdom, values and beliefs" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 65) about the principalship, equity, and human rights. Second, patterns of interaction embedded in existing social relations and regulative elements that underlie institutional structure (Scott, 2013) influenced participant constructions of equitable leadership knowledge. Applicable to both jurisdictions, the Constitution and United Nations Charter on Human Rights contained explicit and direct institutional commitment, values, and means of achieving educational equity and inclusion objectives. Because these instruments are crafted at the national and international levels, they introduced a prescriptive and obligatory dimension and conferred knowledge legitimacy that trumped ideas at the community and school levels.

Therefore, equitable leadership ideas that emanated from participant interpretations of these institutional texts were related to patterns of interaction and could be equated to reality by consensus (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Stacey, 2000). Furthermore, since regulative texts are formulated as “rule-like principles” (Scott, 2013, p. 268) and couched in the language of individual rights to education, participants invariably inferred meanings and institutional obligations related to equitable leadership from these documents because they considered the texts as objective knowledge truths.

Changing educational landscapes provided an impetus for equitable leadership knowledge emergence. In particular, demands for equity and inclusion in the Constitution of Kenya (Law Society of Kenya, 2010), Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education framework, and the resultant patterns of interaction gave rise to what Scott refers to as “means-ends chains” relationship (Scott, 2013, p. 268) as the basis of rationalized equitable leadership knowledge. For example, Kenyan participants associated equitable leadership as shared and inclusive leadership to legal consequences contained in the revised TSC Code of Regulations, Education Act of 2013, and the new Constitution of Kenya of 2010. Similarly, participant constructs related to equal access to education, in the case of student with disabilities, were embedded the new constitution of Kenya. The ideas contained in these policy and legislative frameworks not only highlighted values related to access, equity and inclusion, but the knowledge also appeared objective and were deemed as legally sanctioned, morally governed, and culturally supported. Subsequently, equitable leadership knowledge incorporated attributes such as shared leadership, inclusion, and access based on assumptions underlying legislative and policy intents, but within a broader social and relational framework.

Wango (2011) asserts that when legislative and constitutional changes occur, the knowledge, nature, organizational structure, and underpinning principles of education systems also change to ensure alignment with the new environment. Kakiyama and Sorenson (2002) contend that when changes occur, institutions recalibrate to ensure stability and to maintain relevance. For instance, the Constitution of Kenya of 2010 created new regulative imperatives for educators. As a result, school principals were compelled to make sense of the new knowledge in order to bridge current leadership knowledge with the new legal and social reality which called for equitable leadership concepts. Thus, equitable leadership knowledge emerged in Kenya when changes occurred related to existing laws, regulations, and policies intended to hold educational leaders accountable to equitable outcomes, equal access, and fair treatment of students.

Changes to existing laws and practices and increasing complexities in the educational landscape also led to increased demands for inclusive practices from stakeholders and knowledge emergence. According to Kenyan participants, the demands for equity and inclusion gained momentum when individuals displayed more awareness of their basic rights, thereby compelling school administrators to conform to changing institutional knowledge requirements. In addition, where educational complexities were rooted in changes to existing laws and policies, participants explored information contained in these texts regarding the knowledge they needed to possess, how knowledge could be demonstrated, and the extent to which appointed third parties, such as the school Board of Management, Ministry of Education, and Teacher's Service Commission could enforce equitable leadership knowledge rules. In such instances, equitable leadership knowledge was derived from multiple social settings, which according to Smith's (2005)

ruling relations concepts, represented the medium through which “thoughts and ideas move reciprocally” (p. xii) between participants and other educational stakeholders.

According to Kakiyara and Sorenson (2002), emerging knowledge arises out of interactions between institutions and individuals. They also contend that emerging knowledge is organized based on existing knowledge frameworks and knowledge usefulness. With respect to equitable leadership knowledge emergence in Kenya, the Ministry of Education in consultation with other stakeholders developed a set of policy ideas and frameworks associated with inclusive decision-making that were based on legislative and environmental changes. Similarly, equitable leadership knowledge contained characteristics such as equity, inclusion, and access which were articulated in the constitution and Education Act of 2013. In turn, emerging equitable leadership knowledge as shared and inclusive leadership was deemed useful for addressing accountability demands contained in these legislative changes. Hence, equitable leadership knowledge in Kenya emerged from pre-set characteristics for creating knowledge, “across organizational boundaries” (Kakiyara & Sorenson, 2002, p. 13).

Fundamentally, the system for creating equitable leadership knowledge involved interactions between individual, institutional and non-institutional actors at the ministries of education, professional organizations, legal and judicial systems, school leadership, and the community. As part of everyday constitutive discursive practices for structuring knowledge and social life (Foucault, 1980), this system of creating knowledge relied on, and incorporated institutional processes for (re)evaluating, questioning, and developing new knowledge, as well as institutional frameworks for demonstrating and sanctioning equitable leadership knowledge. At the individual level, equitable leadership knowledge

emerged when existing knowledge, processes, and relations were interpreted as insufficient or contradictory to institutional imperatives. As was the case in Kenya, the expectations placed on participants to involve others, be answerable for their actions, and to be inclusive helped in their construction of equitable leadership knowledge. From the Canadian context, practice challenges related to inequitable student outcomes meant questioning current practices and developing new ideas to ensure equitable outcomes. In both contexts therefore, equitable leadership knowledge emerged as a result of “complex, dynamic and fluid” (Kakihara & Sorenson, 2002, p. 13) interactions that informed and were informed by constitutive discursive practices.

In sum, equitable leadership knowledge emerged from numerous cognitive processes, including those that were tied to social interactions, institutional texts, and changing institutional contexts. In particular, new rules, guidelines, and prohibitions contained in institutional texts such as the Constitution, the Education Act, and the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy triggered the emergence of equitable leadership knowledge within a broader pre-set regulative, normative, and cultural cognitive institutional environment. Additionally, regardless of whether equitable leadership is a common place and an emerging concept as indicated by Canadian and Kenyan participants respectively, its knowledge arose from everyday educational leadership practices, talk, and texts. These everyday practices are embedded in ruling relations (Smith, 1987, 1990, 2005) and subjective interpretations of improvised and situated practices (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Kakihara & Sorenson, 2002). The ensuing section discusses these equitable leadership ideas and the ruling relations that gave rise to them.

Constitutive and Regulatory Rules

At the core of equitable leadership lies a constitutive schema that informs education and educational goals. The roots of these constitutive schemas are located in educational leadership and human rights discourses. Closely related to these constitutive schemas were self-organizing aspects of knowledge and ingrained schema which “constrain and empower” and contribute to “comprehensibility, acceptability, and legitimacy” of equitable leadership (Scott, 2013, p. 228). For instance, Canadian narratives that linked equitable leadership as comparable outcomes to leadership activities that promoted learning among students and educators, teamwork as a way of meeting students learning needs, and quality management located equity and inclusion in leadership discourses.

Similarly, knowledge derived from the teaching profession, laws and regulations, and educational management in Kenya and knowledge derived from teaching and institutional texts such as Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education strategy and the Ontario Human Rights Code in Canada contributed to equitable leadership legitimacy by linking it to human rights discourses and educational leadership strategies. Furthermore, equitable leadership knowledge, as discursive practice, was related to knowledge claims, including the social rules that determined knowledge objects, subjects, choices, and concepts that could be included or excluded (Foucault, 1980). Kenyan and Canadian participants’ constructs such as poverty, its impact on student access and outcomes, as well as the strategies, such as fundraising to mitigate its impact were linked to discursive practices. Furthermore, participant classifications of students and assumptions about social difference or group behaviour set these students apart from other students and

warranted differential treatment. Thus, constitutive schemas and policy texts related to equity and inclusion in education acted as referent points as participants attempted to address differential student outcomes and the disparities in access and outcomes due to difference and poverty in schools.

When it comes to equity and inclusion in education, school boards, schools, and school administrators have a complementary role in ensuring all students access education and achieve their desired educational outcomes. For example, the Ontario Ministry of Education expects school boards to “embed the principles of equity and inclusive education in all aspects of their operations, including policy development, programming, and practices related to research, curriculum resources, instruction, and assessment” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 16). School administrators, as implementers of organizational policy, are also expected to implement educational strategies and practices that are aligned with the principles of equity and inclusive education. Since these expectations are sanctioned by institutional stakeholders and/or “knowledge producers and popularizers” (Thomson et al., 2013, p. viii), they informed the cognitive processes by which “schemas, rules, norms, and routines” (Scott, 2004, p. 2) were established as equitable leadership guidelines in schools. Specifically, Canadian participants assertions that the Strategy provided a framework for building an inclusive education system or that the Code of Conduct is aligned with expectations contained in the Education Act and Kenyan participants reference to the Teachers Service Commission’s Code of Regulations and TSC Act when articulating leadership requirements confirm the existence of underlying constitutive rules and sanctioning processes. These narratives also link equity and inclusive education to other stakeholders

that develop rules and sanction practices. Therefore, equitable leadership knowledge requirements for the principalship are based on assumptions of what it means to lead all aspects of their schools that incorporate mandates from sanctioning bodies.

In addition to regulatory and sanctioning bodies, participants in Kenya and Canada linked equitable leadership knowledge in education to the following cognitive fields: management, finance, psychology, law, and public administration. For instance, management knowledge enabled Kenyan and Canadian participants to identify what approaches might lead to equitable outcomes, analyze equity issues, policies, and regulations, and manage teaching and learning. Ideas related to psychology, which included motivation and counselling skills among Kenyan participants and cultural competency and negotiation skills among Canadian participants were vital to equitable leadership. These findings show that the knowledge regimes from diverse fields of study regulate and sanction (Foucault, 1980) equitable leadership knowledge and practice. Consistent with Scott's (2013) account that institutions are instantiated in multiple media and levels, the use of diverse cognitive fields in the resolution of equity and inclusive education issues confirm the existence of intersecting layers and institutional meaning systems that have already assumed taken-for-granted knowledge status. In turn, the meaning systems underlying these diverse knowledge regimes relate equity and inclusive education and equitable leadership to existing institutional expectations.

Conceiving teaching or instructional knowledge as core to equitable leadership knowledge exemplifies how ideas from other domains can become central to equitable leadership. Specifically, all Canadian and Kenyan participants related teaching knowledge to instructional supervision, teacher and student support, teaching strategies,

and leadership in ways that ensured equity and inclusion for students. The idea that one must have knowledge of fundamental teaching concepts, structures, and enquiry processes, or assumptions that one must be effective in setting learning expectations, monitoring, and evaluating instruction by Kenyan and Canadian participants, put teaching at the core of equity and inclusion in education. These assertions are supported in various literature that position instructional knowledge as a central skill for school administration (Goldwyn, 2008; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015); as a core skill in effective school leadership (Hess & Kelly, 2007); and critical in changing educational environments (Painter, 2006) literature. Similarly, in Kenya where principals develop their understanding of the principalship on the job (Bush & Oduro, 2006; Ibrahim, 2011), a successful record as a teacher coupled with knowledge of key institutional texts was deemed sufficient to address educational equity issues. However, constructing equitable leadership from a teaching lens plays a sanctioning role, highlights an easily understood professional expectation, and promotes the idea that mastery of teaching and instructional knowledge contributes to equity and inclusive education ends.

With knowledge of teaching as a core requirement, it is assumed that both the principalship and equitable leadership are “immersed in a matrix of events, experiences, activities, structures, networks, knowledge, people, histories, interests, resources, artefacts, understandings, beliefs, and commitments” (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011, p. 24) that influence, control, and manage competing educational demands. Instructional and teaching knowledge, as administrative knowledge requirements also not only signified individual ability to manage and support student achievement (Nestor-Baker & Hoy, 2001) but was also connected to educational processes that shaped professional practice

and constructed equitable leadership discourse. Teaching knowledge was therefore tied to educational outcome expectations. Further, positioning teaching as a core leadership requirement for the principalship and equitable leadership tacitly communicated that in order to “improve student learning, then you have to focus on how teachers and classroom practices can deliver higher outcomes” (Thomson et al., 2013, p. xi). Thus, at the centre of the relationship between teaching and equitable leadership are knowledge truths (Foucault, 1980) and ruling relations based on power differentials between school principals, teaching staff, and students.

Gillies (2013) reminds us that educational management and leadership discourses revolve around assumptions that education is about outcomes and about the most effective means of achieving those outcomes. Because of this outcome focus, it is often argued that the quality of leadership practices in a school can make a significant difference to the learning and achievement of students. For instance, Robinson (2011) posits that “in the higher-performing schools it [leadership] is much more focused on the business of improving learning and teaching” (p. 3). According to Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004), leadership is second only to teaching in its impact on student outcomes. First, the idea of teaching as a business associates learning outcomes with market-based approaches which feature stronger managerial controls, cost reductions, and restrictions (Scott, 2013) that favour dominant groups. In relation to equitable leadership, teaching as a business reflects narrow management notions and/or technical aspects of education that are focused on the control of staff, students, and resources. Not surprisingly, such management notions continue to fail students who do not reflect the dominant majority. Second, associating leadership with student outcomes

is probably viewed from the point of view of administrator ability to manage educational issues, policies, and regulations as well as their ability to support teaching decisions related to equity and inclusive education. In particular, the special attention paid to the appointment, placement, and mentorship of administrators in Canadian educational systems reflected institutional concerns with efficient means of securing valued educational outcomes. Consequently, as equitable leadership knowledge influencers, management and efficiency privileged managerial control of equity and inclusive education issues. These two ideas are also rooted in ruling relations and other sanctioning practices associated with teaching, educational planning, and educational outcomes.

Another dimension of management and leadership revolve around institutional value-ends that are developed and reflected in discursive practices. For instance, Scott (2008a, 2013) and Smith (1990, 2005) remind us that individual actions are informed and constrained by ways in which institutional knowledge is constructed. In particular, when study participants linked equitable outcomes to teaching knowledge, plus attendant concepts, structures, and enquiry processes, these ideas were not only related to instructional approaches for different groups and the means of measuring outcomes, but they became foundational to legitimacy claims because they were centered on the cultural cognitive pillar. Similarly, because institutions and organizations are characterized by explicit knowledge bases (Lam, 2000), even contradictory ideas related to teaching, such as drilling students in preparation for OSSLT and KNEC exams were acceptable strategies in so far as they contributed to valued-ends. This focus on specific valued educational ends prescribed knowledge ideas and beliefs as a means of ensuring that the actions of equitable leaders were socially and professionally acceptable.

Essentially, knowledge of teaching, management, and leadership, with their assumed normative and regulative dimensions served the needs of schools by ensuring instructional leadership, delegation, and quality control. Additionally, because cognitive conceptions that underlie teaching and management can represent characteristic forms of co-ordinating work, they are in turn equated to institutional sanctioning activities (Scott, 2013) related to equitable leadership. Therefore, linking participant understandings of equitable leadership with other shared understandings and schemas show that equitable leadership knowledge is “located in the textual traces” (Smith, 1990, p. 220) of the educational world. By extension, locating equitable leadership in existing textual relations, that for the most part work because they represent the needs of the majority, ensures that as long as equity and inclusion is focused on the needs of minority groups, then it will continue to remain an educational aspiration, but with very little chances of being realized within existing social arrangements.

Regulative Pillar and Knowledge Rules

Regulative institutional elements are often contained in institutional texts such as regulations, acts, and policies. Accordingly, these institutional texts, as part of regulative elements that underlie institutional structure, outline “explicit regulatory processes—rule setting, monitoring, and sanctioning activities” (Scott, 2013, p. 59) that are considered as objectified and independent forms of knowledge (Smith, 1990). Study participants confirmed that knowledge of laws, regulations, and policies related to educational access and equity were fundamental to their understanding of equitable leadership knowledge. They also stressed the importance of reviewing policies, regulations, and rules in order to

confirm equitable leadership knowledge and comply with policies, regulations and laws related to educational equity and access.

Within institutions, the primary mechanism of control is fear of sanctions and instrumentality (Gillies, 2013; Scott, 2013). As a result, when Kenyan and Canadian participants stressed compliance to regulatory imperatives related to equity and inclusive education contained in the Code of Regulations, the Education Act, and so forth, or when they followed laid down procedures, it shows that how participants constructed equitable leadership knowledge was aligned to institutional rules based on anticipated rewards and/or fear of punishment. These findings illustrate that irrespective of context, knowledge “conformity is the only response for those subject to regulatory rules” (Scott, 2013, p. 67) unless one is willing to face the consequences of not following rules and regulations.

In Ontario, school-level access and equity policies were aligned with and supported the Boards Human Rights policy, Safe Schools Policy, and Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009). These policies made references to the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Constitution Act, 1982 and the Ontario Human Rights Code. As a result, they contributed to equitable leadership knowledge and according to Goddard and Hart (2007), also support principals’ efforts to facilitate equal access for all students. However, the primary mechanism for ensuring equal access is through institutionalized knowledge rules that facilitate, supplement, and support equitable leadership. Therefore, policies as institutional texts oscillate between the regulative and normative pillar by

representing objectified forms of knowledge (Smith, 1990) and outlining knowledge rules (Scott, 2013) which inform and sanction situated practices of teachers and principals.

Knowledge rules also defined constitutive rules. For instance, rules related to access and equity were evident in the Ontario Human Rights Code, Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009), Constitution of Kenya of 2010, Education Act of 2013, and other educational texts. Because these institutional texts objectified rules related to what is prohibited and the basis of prohibition such as gender, language, religion, race, and so forth, the resulting constitutive knowledge operated at a deeper level of reality creation and involved the devising of socially constructed categories based on participant interpretations of educational expectations, values, and norms. Specifically, the school Re-entry policy in Kenya was intended to ensure the right to education for pregnant girls. In Canada, the Ontario Anti-Discrimination Policy's intent was to ensure inclusion irrespective of gender, race, or other marginalizing factors. In both cases, a child's right to education, as an independent fact linked to United Nations' Covenants, related equitable leadership as access and outcomes to broader knowledge norms which had assumed "taken for granted" status (Smith, 1990, p. 93). Thus, equitable leadership as individual rights to education brought to the fore other rights-based orientations to equity and inclusive education and illuminated "virtual realities" (Smith, 1990, p. 62) related to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms that entailed legal and professional ramifications. In other words, equity and inclusive education knowledge rules resulted in the "social construction of actors and associated capacities and roles" as well as defined the "penalties associated with rule infractions" (Scott, 2013, p. 77).

Participants' assertions that knowledge of laws and regulations were critical to

equitable leadership knowledge were driven by what Smith (2005) describes as prevailing ruling relations and discursive practices. As an example, ruling relations determine the roles, responsibilities, and knowledge requirements for the principalship by dictating the mandates of stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education and integrating “each particular local setting to a larger generalized complex of social relations” (Smith, 1987, p.156). For equitable leadership, international conventions, local laws against discrimination, regulations contained in the Education Act, and school/board policies related to equity and inclusive education provide guidance to forms of control—“forms that we know as bureaucracy, administration, management, professional organization” (Smith, 1990, p. 6). At the core of these discursive practices were explicit formal and informal roles and responsibilities. The participants understood that principals had total responsibility for everything that occurred in their schools, whereas teachers were responsible for teaching and students’ outcomes. Thus, discursive practices encompassed social relations intended to control institutional activities related to equity and inclusion, teaching, learning, people, and educational resources. Consequently, at the heart of these ruling relations is an integration of power and knowledge, since

the exercise of power constantly creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power. ... It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power.

(Foucault, 1980, p. 52)

In essence, equitable leadership knowledge, understood as teaching, management, and professional expectations engendered different forms of social life such as teachers and administrators, each with distinct powers, that make individuals subject to those

categories. These categories that connect participant knowledge to sanctioned institutional knowledge also embody power differentials in terms of techniques such as applied or special needs classes as well as explicit policies that construct subjects and objects in relation to equity and inclusion. Accordingly, ruling relations integrate power and knowledge by constituting ways of knowing and acting through knowledge typifications (Scott, 2013) and externally constructed concepts (Smith, 1990, 2005) that are based on assumptions of what was professionally acceptable.

Equity and inclusive education policy positions were derived from regulative, normative, and cognitive elements that underlie institutional structures. As a result, policy positions, with policy understood as text and discourse (Ball, 1993), conveyed ruling relations (Smith, 2005) and objective forms of knowledge. By extension, discursive practices surrounding policies helped participants to make sense of equitable leadership knowledge and deliver on its goals and objectives. However, because policies functioned as “textual interventions into practice,” they also resulted in equitable leadership challenges (Ball, 1993, p. 12). For example, challenges with policy directives arose when policies and regulatory controls failed to take into account local educational contexts and when practice expectations emanating from the policies contradicted individual values. Specifically, the Kenyan Ministry of Education’s fee and re-entry policies that were supposed to lead to greater access for students presented equitable leadership challenges to school principals because they were perceived as unsuitable in some educational contexts. The Fee Policy, although intended to reduce discrepancies in fees paid by students for secondary school education, was perceived to contribute to reduced access for students living in poverty. A second conflict arose when the policy appeared to

advocate the same funding treatment of schools irrespective of contextual issues. However, administrators argued that schools with well-developed infrastructure did not need to charge the same amount of fees as those that were still developing their infrastructure. Underlying these challenges were perceptions of policy unsuitability. Assumedly, the constitutive knowledge that informed the development of these policies minimized contextual differences. By extension, the resulting policy reflected a disjuncture between institutional referent points for “constructing meaning... dealing with contradictions” (Ball, 1993, p. 14) that arose at the local level. At the intersection of this disjuncture were participant attempts to “integrate socially constructed meaning with his or her subjectively experienced reality” (Rottmann, 2011, p. 25).

Knowledge claims contained in some policy texts were also perceived as threatening. The Ministry of Education (Kenya) behaviour guidance guidelines, although consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in relation to cruel and inhuman treatment, was problematic for some Kenyan participants because it presented a marked departure from accepted cultural forms of behaviour guidance. In this case, the Guidelines enforced zero tolerance on corporal punishment while participant experiences were grounded in beliefs that corporal punishment ensured faster, effective, and culturally expected compliance to school rules. Institutionally, knowledge is legitimated when relevant actors regard it as the natural way of doing things (Scott, 2013), in this instance, the knowledge is anchored to local and international human rights instruments. However, the policy was still perceived as a threat emerging from an external force that scuttled individual efforts, contradicted contextual requirements, values, and compromised student outcomes. From the results, it

is possible that the “automatic and equal application of educational laws and policies creates a restrictive environment” (Goddard & Hart, 2007, p. 20) which participants interpreted as contradictory. Therefore, although educational policies represent forms of sanctioned institutional knowledge, their indiscriminate application, however well intended, can be problematic when addressing issues of equity and inclusion in education.

Ambiguities and contradictions also arose in relation to behaviour guidance policies in Kenya and Canada. In both jurisdiction, participants linked student behaviours to equitable access and outcomes. For example, in the Kenyan context, this disciplinary policy imposed a behaviour guidance strategy that was incompatible with local norms. Participants also felt that they would spend more time talking and dealing with behaviour issues instead of teaching, which impacts outcomes. Specifically, the student behaviour guidance policy in the revised Basic Education Act of 2013 Section 4, 36 (1-2) of Kenya for example, indicates that “A person who contravenes the provision of sub-section (1) commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding one hundred thousand shillings or to imprisonment not exceeding six months or both” (p. 241). This regulation triggered stakeholder concerns related to professional sanctions and punishment for school administrators who contravened these guidelines. The concerns were rooted in cultural and institutional practices where physical punishment of students was the norm. Thus, because they were unable to discipline students, they argued that most students became unruly, which impacted the students educational outcomes.

In the Canadian context, inequitable outcomes tied to student behaviours were intertwined with race and poverty. For example, Canadian participants’ equity and inclusive education concerns were tied to behavioural problems and poor social skills in

predominantly minority and racialized populations. Admittedly, Kenyan participants did not have local equitable leadership policies that would help to contextualize these behavior management guidelines. However, Canadian schools and school boards already had policy guidelines regarding equity and inclusive education that could help participants contextualize these ambiguities. Yet, both groups still grapple with and use these ambiguities to make sense of equitable leadership knowledge.

In sum, regulative institutional elements provided the knowledge context as well as informed and constrained equitable leadership knowledge and practices. These regulatory knowledge and practice elements were aligned with institutional texts such as the Kenyan Constitution, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Ontario Human Rights Code, Ontario Ministry of Education Guidelines, among others. They also relayed an intrinsic value-end related to individual rights to education that enabled participants to conceptualize valued educational outcomes. Finally, equity and inclusive education policies and other related school policies, as reference points, helped to establish meaning within a broader educational framework as participants drew upon them to address issues of equity and inclusion.

Norms and Shared Symbolic Representations

Normative institutional elements refer to norms and values that prescribe what is desirable and preferred, standards for assessment, and legitimate means to pursue valued institutional ends (Scott, 2013). These elements also lead to the establishment of organized institutional systems and professional associations, which in turn help stakeholders to create collective meaning and realign individual and organizational goals (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). In turn, the meanings and interpretive frameworks

associated with the symbols become normative concepts and are “maintained and transformed as they are employed to make sense of the ongoing stream of happenings” (Scott, 2013, p. 67). For example, norms associated with institutional processes for constructing knowledge, which included interactions with and between institutional actors, such as the Ministry of Education, the judicial system, and other system actors gave rise to shared symbols, such as the Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and school level policies in Canada, as valid ways and knowledge for dealing with emerging educational issues. Benchmarking activities undertaken by Kenyan participants not only helped to define how equitable leadership was understood, but also contributed to the creation of knowledge norms that had to be followed because they were believed to be widely shared. Embracing a similar stance, Mitchell and Sackney (2009) contend that normative concepts reflect individual and group assumptions about acceptable institutional knowledge, practices, and patterns of action. These concepts also sanction and constitute the nature of reality as individuals comply with institutional imperatives based on social obligation (Scott, 2013).

Symbolic systems and common schemas linked participants to the objects of their work by stimulating reactions and by “producing and reproducing social life” (Scott, 2013, p. 57). For instance, symbolic systems related to equitable leadership were tied to accountability for educating all students and the use of acceptable assessment tools and instructional technologies. In practice, these symbolic systems linked equitable leadership to curriculum, instructional technologies, standardized tests, and educational outcomes to observable actions that demonstrated equity and inclusion in education as outlined in school policies, procedures, and leadership practice norms. Furthermore, these cognitive

symbols were related to the law, the Children's Act, and the constitution, and other institutional texts which outlined parameters, behaviours, and responsibilities that focused on the legal and ethical implications of exclusion. In other words, symbolic systems and schemas operated in "representational, constructive, and directive ways" and were instrumental to how knowledge was constructed because they provided cognitive guidance and direction (D'Andrade, as cited in Scott, 2013, p. 63). From Scott's (2013) institutional perspective, when participants linked equity and inclusive education to assessment practices, for instance, they confirmed that symbolic systems and common schemas associated with equitable leadership helped in knowledge interpretation, consolidation, and codification based on existing ruling relations. Therefore, equitable leadership knowledge and practices are linked to symbolic systems and common institutional schemas, which in turn stimulate interpretive reactions that ensure participants and schools operate within certain behaviour and practice norms.

Participant knowledge constructs related to equitable leadership skills, competencies, and dispositions were also influenced by constitutive and regulative rules which, as Minsky (1975) stipulates, are predicated on structure and externally managed. In terms of equitable leadership knowledge construction the normative legal framework and interactions with professional bodies in both Kenya and Canada, helped to define the practices that led to equity and inclusion. For instance, the idea from Kenyan and Canadian participants that there are accepted equitable leadership professional codes and dispositions lend credence to the notion that there are external processes for consolidating, organizing, and codifying knowledge. Elaborating, the belief by some Canadian participants that negotiation skills revolve around processes that are

participatory and consultative speak more to rules and social behaviors associated with negotiations. However, although these negotiation skills are important for addressing issues of power, competing priorities, and relationships in educational institutions (Smulyan, 2000), I would argue that negotiation skills are applicable in many settings. In short, constitutive rules related to negotiation skills are recognized as normative equitable leadership concepts simply because individual actions and behaviours privilege them as acceptable decision-making practices. By extension, participant recognition of other professional norms, confirm that individual actions and knowledge are constituted discursively in a way that represents the structures that create, validate, and enforce specific norms and discourses (Foucault, 1980; Scott, 2013). In addition to particular interaction contexts, constitutive frameworks which were drawn from diverse cognitive fields, helped in transforming equitable leadership ideas to normative knowledge status. These included legal and practice norms that revolved around human rights, claims of equality, and responsibilities placed on schools leaders, which according to Bryk et al. (2010), include establishing, improving, and maintaining high-quality and accessible education for all students.

Professional bodies, according to Scott (2013), are normative systems that confer rights, responsibilities, privileges, duties, licenses, and mandates. In both jurisdictions, the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) and Teachers Service Commission (TSC) in Kenya represented professional bodies that conferred knowledge rights, responsibilities, and privileges associated with teaching and learning. Furthermore, given that (a) “collective actors are similarly constructed” (Scott, 2013, p. 79), (b) education revolves around teaching and learning, and (c) the primary role of OCT and TSC is to confer

teaching rights, privileges, and licensing, it was not surprising that teaching and instructional knowledge were constructed as catalysts for equitable leadership. This knowledge construct was directly related to Kenyan and Canadian participants' professional credibility claims as well as their ability to provide leadership to the instructional program, and monitor and evaluate equitable access and outcomes. By extension, underlying these knowledge norms were legitimacy and credibility claims of professional bodies, which Scott (2008c) states, rest on accreditation, assessment, and accountability norms that reproduce social life through knowledge, values, and belief assumptions. This means that when participants located their professional identity within teaching and learning discourse, they imposed a professionally sanctioned knowledge truth, including those related to assessments and accountability, that contributed to equitable leadership sensemaking. This identity, in turn gave rise to a form of social life that was upheld because of the powerful disciplinary mechanisms that form the cornerstone of social ordering.

Accountability and assessment, as sanctioned knowledge, were used to make sense of equity and inclusive education realities. For instance, although Kenyan participants understood that increased accountability structures, such as repetitive exam drills, moved the focus away from desired education that should take place, they still used their school's prior year assessment results to inform and justify teaching to the test. Plausibly, these accountability and assessment rituals, as practice norms that reproduce systemic success and failure, were still deemed as valid educational strategies. These findings confirm Anderson and Jafaar's (2006) assertion that when faced with inequitable access and outcomes, administrative practices consistently gravitate towards educational

structures that promote increased accountability. The findings also confirm Artiles's (2011) argument that the practice of focusing on student assessment when teaching leads to the creation of additional accountability measures that are oriented towards "general education and special education" (p. 431), which ignores the needs of students with different abilities or those who were deemed different by the educational system. For equitable leadership therefore, increased accountability as an educational norm is only conceivable when patterned actions are "learned within, and sustained and renewed by relational systems" (Scott, 2013, p. 102) embedded in teaching and learning practices.

Even when school administrators understood that standardized educational assessments and evaluation practices reflected "narrow notions of accountability, excellence, and success" (Portelli et al., 2007, p. i) or the negative consequences of student streaming and/or "remedial programs" (Davis & Armstrong, 2012, p. 30), they still reported using the same assessment tools. In the Kenyan context, participants reported that they conducted assessments using KCSE exam papers from prior years. As standardized tools, these exam papers and by extension assessment criteria, were based on the assumption that their mastery represented valid and institutionally and culturally supported knowledge. They also represented widely shared educational controls tied to teaching outcomes encoded as rules, policies, and procedures that served all students. Equally, underlying these accountability notions were beliefs that student performance in standardized exams is primary evidence of educational and teaching success. Therefore, failing to participate in these ritualized activities could negatively impact their jobs, identities as school administrators, and school funding.

Furthermore, normalizing practices such as standardized tests, continue to be deployed because they represent patterns of practice based on multiple layers of meaning and interpretations. From a pillars perspective, these practices are rooted in coercive, normative, and mimetic institutional compliance mechanisms (Scott, 2013) and deployed out of the understanding that those who comply are encouraged, rewarded, and valued as effective school leaders. Therefore, participant use of standardized assessment tools demonstrate that accountability notions are located in institutional normalising practices, including how participants are socialized into these positions. It also demonstrates that participants' lived experiences and how they self-created (Gillies, 2013) as equitable leaders were coordinated through institutional texts that helped them to make sense of, and justify existing accountability mechanisms within equitable leadership practices. According to Ryan (2010), when individuals focus on narrow notions of accountability, a large portion of their teaching activities revolve around efforts to increase scores on standardized tests. Elaborating, he contends that such tests not only violate equity principles, they compromise the learning of already-marginalized students. As such, even when educators support standardized tests on the basis that the tests motivate students to be better prepared for college-level academic work (see Moses & Nanna, 2007) and when they focus on test-taking strategies such as the Kenyan results indicate, their actions signal a tacit acceptance of common standards of evaluation and assessment for all students. Institutionally, it means that taken for granted assessment practices, although marginalizing, continue to "persist and spread because they are regarded as appropriate" (Scott, 2013, p. 73). In the case of equity and inclusive education concerns tied to assessment practices in Kenya and Canada, structural inequities will persist simply because these participants failed to problematize the power/knowledge relations

embedded in accountability regimes and/or ignored the variety of ways students come to know and interpret their world.

In summary, this section provided an insight into how equity leadership knowledge emerged and discussed knowledge concepts, including those linked to a labyrinth of educational rules, laws, roles, and policies that contributed to conceptual incoherence. The results confirm that equitable leadership knowledge is layered upon existing constitutive schema. This layering of equitable leadership knowledge with existing constitutive schemas, especially those that are intended to maintain existing relations, contributed to the contradictions and challenges that bedevilled equitable leadership in both jurisdictions. Specifically, the practices related to educational accountability, standardization, and assessments represented shared norms that were both internalized and imposed by other actors. The internalization of problematic accountability discourses within an equity and inclusive education frame rationalized these discourses and enabled participants “to speak and to act authoritatively” (Gillies, 2013, p. 13) even when wrong. They also led to normalization of systems of “surveillance... self-management, and control” (Gillies, 2013, p. 14) without regard to “whose assessments count in the determining of legitimacy of a set of arrangements” (Scott, 2013, p. 73). In other words, by internalizing and enacting problematic accountability practices, participants aligned themselves with ruling relations and dominant discursive practices (Foucault, 1980) whose default effect was the reproduction of inequality (Sensoy & DiAngelo, (2014).

The study confirms that the underlying intent of the laws, rules, and policies that informed equitable leadership knowledge was to advance societal interests related to

equity and inclusion in education. As a result, the intertwining of equitable leadership knowledge with various international institutional texts and local rules, policies, and regulations related to equity and inclusion played a supportive and enabling role. Within the context of interlocking rules, laws, and policies, school principals benefited from the articulation of explicit equitable leadership ideas. This articulation ensured that equity and inclusive education was foundational to meeting the needs of diverse students. Furthermore, it is not naïve to expect that since the laws that informed equity and inclusion were crafted and agreed upon at the international and local stage, the practice of equitable leadership left very little room to disagree with many of the prescriptive aspects of regulatory processes. One therefore expected that these institutional texts supported equal access (Goddard & Hart, 2007); gave educators the “legal and moral responsibility to care for and support all students” (Davis & Armstrong, 2012, p. 28); and provided an institutional mechanism for sanctioning those who do not conform.

Contextual Equitable Leadership Imperatives and Challenges

Globally, school administrators deal with different contexts and issues that impact equity and inclusion in education. As a result, educational institutions vary in terms of normative expectations placed on school administrators which, according to Armstrong (2010), can compel individuals to shift their expectations, goals, and behaviours in response to normative practices of their schools. In Kenya and Canada, equitable leadership as shared leadership, access, and outcomes were constructed as educational norms. These constructs presented challenges and opportunities for school administrators. However, participants reported that challenges arose from equitable leadership practices tied to these knowledge concepts. Similarly, there were underlying pathologies of silence

related to race/ethnicity as well as assumed linkages between race, poverty and educational access and outcomes. This section explores these ideas and the challenges related to how they were constructed.

Shared Leadership as an Institutional Imperative

Equitable leadership as shared leadership is not a new concept in educational discourse and often refers to processes in which stakeholders are included or fairly represented in educational decisions. In the Canadian context, these ideas can be traced to various institutional texts. For example, Peel District School Board's Policy #54 on Equity and Inclusive Education states that the Peel Board is committed to shared leadership as a strategy for improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps. York Region Catholic District School Board Policy #613 states "the Board subscribes to a shared leadership philosophy that inspires, empowers, and supports" (2015, p. 2). Ryan (2010) also confirms that equitable leadership as shared leadership has the potential of advancing the inclusion of individuals in the cultural, institutional, and economic lives of schools. These documents acted as institutional referent points and aided in the construction of sanctioned knowledge among Canadian participants.

Among other institutional texts, the Kenyan constitution, Ministry of Education Guidelines, Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, and school board policies positioned shared leadership as an institutional value and legitimated as a shared norm in Kenya and Canada. According to study results, Kenyan and Canadian participants constructed shared leadership as leadership practices where school stakeholders had an equal share in making decisions and in taking responsibility for the decisions. Examples of shared leadership practices were related to teaching and learning decisions,

consultations with parents and other stakeholders, and in team strategies. These practices show that shared leadership was embedded in administrative practice and considered as legitimate knowledge. Adopting a broader perspective, shared leadership constructs reflect existing discourse. Within the context of inclusive leadership, Ryan (2006, 2007) states that shared leadership calls for the inclusion of parents, students, teachers, and community members in schools' governance and decision-making activities. Similarly, from a knowledge legitimation point of view, which Scott (2013) states occur when relevant actors regard a particular knowledge construct as the natural way, equitable leadership as shared leadership constructs legitimates institutional knowledge and practices for ensuring equity and inclusion in education.

Regulative institutional elements are based on a continuum whose values vary along the following three dimensions: obligation, precision and delegation (Scott, 2013). When extended to equitable leadership, the regulative pillar ensures that school administrators in Canada, for example, are governed by precise rules regarding who can do what and to whom. Explicit assertions that equity was a “shared responsibility” and that “establishing an equitable and inclusive education system requires commitment from all education partners” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 7) outline the precision, delegation, and obligations embedded in these institutional texts. Furthermore, the ministries of education in both jurisdictions and the Kenyan Teachers Service Commission Act in Kenya were clear that the principal was in charge of teaching, administration, and management of schools. In practice, participants however noted that shared leadership, as articulated in these institutional texts presented challenges. These challenges stemmed from the point of view that the power embodied in institutional

accountability mechanisms were still vested on individuals or positions within educational institutions. Importantly, these texts were silent on how shared leadership could be implemented within an accountability regime. Therefore, although a question still remained as to who gets sanctioned, recognized, or disciplined when shared decisions fail, participants still conformed to these knowledge demands because they were subject to scrutiny and because their knowledge and actions are dually ordered.

Behind participants' equitable leadership knowledge constructs were powerful institutional sanctioning processes. These processes involve rewards or punishments as a way of influencing individual behavior and occur through "informal mechanisms, involving folkways such as shaming or shunning activities, or may be highly formalized and assigned to special actors such as the police and courts" (Scott, 2013, p. 60). In the case of equitable leadership, participants in Kenya and Canada confirmed the involvement of courts and the police as well as instances of shaming and shunning by communities of practice when things did not go well with their decisions or in cases of poor student performance. Of import, because equity and inclusion are rooted in human rights discourse and the legal system, sanctioning processes justified the use of coercive power, entailed legal ramifications, and were enforceable by third parties. Thus, while at a superficial level constructing equitable leadership as shared leadership appears benign, underneath are formal sanctioning processes that Weick (1995) identifies as instrumental to collective interpretations, institutional sensemaking, and knowledge compliance.

Participants from Kenya and Canada alluded to sanctions geared towards institutions and individuals. They expressed specific fears tied to legal and professional sanctioning. Although sanctions are an expected administrative practice reality, this fear

of sanctions, according to Berryhill, Linney, and Fromewick (2009), is magnified when institutions increase accountability demands. Not surprisingly, to avoid sanctioning arising from delegated roles or role contradictions, some participants from Kenya and Canada portrayed themselves as fully accountable and in control, based on the recognition that they were legally liable. Acknowledging that participant fear of sanctions could be socially constructed, it still cannot be underestimated because of the expectations and responsibilities invested in the principalship. Institutionally, these expectations and responsibilities can lead to contradictions between “demands at the macro level and conflicting role demands at the individual level” (Scott, 2013, p. 63) that are inevitable when leadership is shared. Therefore, to reduce these fears and for shared leadership to be effective within existing educational structures, individual roles and how individuals are expected to conform to institutional expectations must be restructured.

Participants made sense of equitable leadership as shared leadership at multiple levels and involved the development of common frames of reference and shared local definitions. Presupposing, shared leadership was deemed an obligatory institutional value because it was included in the Ontario Leadership Framework and Ministry of Education Guidelines in Kenya. These texts connected shared leadership to wider cultural frames, norms and rules. They also assigned “cognitive validity” (Scott, 2013, p. 72), objectified and legitimated an otherwise socially constructed concept. Adopting Berger and Luckmann’s (1966) insights on knowledge institutionalization and Scott’s (2013) ideas on the role played by socially mediated construction of a common framework of meanings, shared leadership concepts acquired acceptable symbolic representations and was no longer perceived as contradictory and impossible. In other words, through

legitimation, shared leadership was constructed as a valid social fact, which in turn helped school principals to crystalize and objectify meanings within a broader framework of what was acceptable within their community of practice.

Finally, equitable leadership as shared leadership practice can be a daunting task given that equitable leadership knowledge emerged within an institutional system of creating and validating legitimate knowledge. Underlying these knowledge systems were socially constructed processes and text-based forms of knowledge that are geared towards the needs of the majority and which, as Smith (1990, 2005) states, are used to rule people. Berger and Luckmann (1966) also contend that constitutive rules that underlie knowledge systems are based on elaborate processes for organizing meaning and include those that create “objectively and subjectively real” categories and typifications (p. 39). Scott (2013) asserts that “constitutive rules are so basic to social structure, so fundamental to social life that they are often overlooked” (p. 78). The results confirm these arguments since equitable leadership knowledge incorporated dominant institutional processes for organizing knowledge as well as ruling relations intended to shape and stabilize social behaviours. Therefore, contradictions will arise when equitable leaders attempt to disrupt normative decision-making practices or attempt to transform the structural foundations of their equitable leadership knowledge and practice. In the end, equitable leadership in general and shared leadership concepts only become acceptable because of normative and coercive elements that underlie education.

In short, constructing equitable leadership as shared leadership as well as the resultant challenges bring us back full circle to the various concepts associated with institutional pillars. From a normative perspective, shared leadership has been identified

as essential for ensuring equity, inclusion and social justice for all students (Dantley & Tillman, 2010). Further, cognitive symbols and meanings associated with shared leadership confer legitimacy because of their “perceived correctness and soundness” (Scott, 2013, p. 68) for addressing equity and inclusive education practice issues. Although it may appear arbitrary, the concept of shared leadership is connected to what Scott (2008a, 2013) describes as wider cultural frames, norms, or rules that underlie institutions. Hence, participant assertions that shared leadership is incompatible with accountability and responsibility ascribed to various officers speak to their local realities. Similarly, because disconnects arising between local realities and broader social realities occur in the early stages of knowledge construction and during knowledge contestation, they can get resolved as knowledge becomes institutionalized. In other words, when widely supported and legitimated, even contradictory cultural cognitive ideas gain widespread acceptance.

Smith’s work reminds us of the powerful forces within and across multiple settings which order and coordinate institutional life. On one hand, equitable leadership, and by extension shared leadership, must be understood within a “larger generalized complex of social relations” (Smith, 1987, p. 156). On the other hand, one must remember that equitable leadership is about practices that disrupt the institutional systems, structures, and barriers that reinforce historical inequities (see Chege, 2006; Dantley & Tillman, 2010; Furman & Shields, 2005; Galloway & Ishimaru, 2017; UNESCO, 2009). Therefore, although there are powerful forces that order and coordinate administrative practice, equitable leadership is still embedded in concepts such as privilege and oppression, change, and structural barriers. In other words, (de)constructing

equitable leadership, (dis)connecting knowledge to and from institutional obligations, and the resultant challenges are part of everyday equitable leadership practice realities.

Similarly, although, associating shared leadership with institutional pillars can be problematic when redressing persistent disparities and inequities for students that are nested in dominant social relations, one must remember that shared leadership has the potential of involving those constructed as “other” in how knowledge is constructed and deployed and help to destabilize unequal social relations when combined with other educational strategies.

Equal Access and Equitable Outcomes

At the heart of equitable leadership were participant concerns with unequal access and inequitable outcomes for some students. These concerns were rooted in legally binding, morally sanctioned, and comprehensible international and national texts that inform education in Kenya and Canada. These texts outlined individual rights to access education and their rights to quality education. UNESCO (2009), for instance, stipulates that in order for students to realize their full potential through education, disparities of access and outcomes that arise from gender, race, age, income, ethnicity, and so forth must be eliminated. Other international and local texts also centered on individual rights to education, including the Education Act in both jurisdictions that advocated equitable access to education. Accordingly, Canadian and Kenyan participants constructed equitable leadership from the perspective of equal access and equitable outcomes for students. Similarly, because these text-based forms of knowledge link disparities of access to race, poverty, gender, ability, and so forth, it was not surprising that both Kenyan and Canadian participants expressed concerns with educational access and

outcomes of students from low social economic backgrounds, students with learning disabilities, and language and racial minority students.

At the school and school board level, access and equity were constructed from a rights-based perspective. In Canada, for example, TDSB, Peel Board, and YRCDSB's equity and inclusive education policies promote various practices believed to lead to the success of all students irrespective of differences related to race, gender, language, and so forth. In these policies, the achievement of equitable access depended on each school's ability to respond to student diversity and to "identify and eliminate the barriers" to inclusion (YRCDSB, 2015). Furthermore, assertions by a Canadian participant that equitable leadership entailed removing barriers for students is connected to these equity and inclusive education concepts, albeit they are internally and externally constructed. A relationship therefore exists between equitable leadership knowledge, activities for resolving institutional problems, and text-based forms of knowledge.

From these founding conceptions, education is designed to ensure equitable access and enable students to realize their full potential. As such, institutional representations and meanings, as outlined by Scott (2013), Weick et al. (2005), and Weick (1995) must include rules, norms, cultural cognitive beliefs, and associated activities that can ensure the realization of above goals. Any other outcomes, including the persistent failure to address inequitable access based on students' differences ultimately presented an ambiguous educational situation. This ambiguity, explained as lack of distinctions between multiple interpretations by Weick et al. (2005), implies that existing educational structures are not addressing presenting issues related to equity and inclusion or that existing interpretations include negative social attitudes directed towards

groups that are deemed as different (McLain, Kefallonitis, & Armani, 2015). For instance, when Kenyan and Canadian participants attributed student differences to unequal access, it implies that these students presented an ambiguous situation, which participants made sense of by assuming that something inherent in student differences contributed to their failure. Nevertheless, since participant ways of knowing and acting are mutually constituted, such ambiguity cannot be separated from sensemaking activities and sanctioned institutional knowledge. To think otherwise places Foucault's (1980, 1982) materiality of practice and Scott's (2013) institutional framework, which transmit sanctioned knowledge and help individuals to make sense of organizational realities through socially mediated frames of reference, at the periphery of knowledge truths.

Equitable educational outcomes remained a mirage for a vast number of students in Kenya and Canada. Even in Canada where equitable leadership, equity, and inclusive education enjoyed a long history and are considered as a common catch-phrase by Portelli et al. (2007), differential outcomes still persisted. In Canada, the failure of a disproportionate number of minority students in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) and "the inequitable distribution of high success rates across program streams" (Anderson & Jaafar, 2006, p. 18) is supported by Canadian participant accounts. Participant assertions that 60% of Kenyan students in certain classification of schools failed their Grade 12 national examinations is also supported in literature. These inequities in the educational outcomes of students were explained from the perspective of insufficient resources and inability to meet the diverse needs of the students. Factors such as poverty, race, dis/abilities, assessment practices, school admission, and placement

criteria were constructed as risk factors for differential outcomes. Underlying these explanations were beliefs that student differences contributed to their failure.

However, a compelling explanation is rooted in suggestions that differential treatment arise out of how individuals are classified (Mohr & Neely, 2009) and are associated with unequal knowledge power relationships (Foucault, 1980). Specifically, differential outcomes and subject categories related to equity and inclusive education are constructed, disseminated, and legitimized by those with knowledge power. The point herein, how student differences are understood, what is accepted as valid knowledge, and the means of resolving differential treatments are at the root of unequal knowledge power relationships. Describing a similar relationship, Walton (2011) contends that social problems are deemed in a particular way by people in power who generate and legitimize knowledge. In the case of equitable leadership, once assumed deficiencies based on student differences are legitimized, the knowledge acquires objective knowledge status and is used to rationalize majority interests and to define equity and inclusive education goals, objects, and subjects. As a result, when equitable leadership knowledge is constructed within an institutional lens, by default, it does not pay attention to individual differences and can result in the systematic exclusion of the interests of minority students in strategies intended to address their exclusion. Understandably therefore, persistent differential outcomes are systemic and located in educational realities that maintain and reproduce unequal knowledge power relationships.

Equity and inclusive education is embedded in educational norms manifested as educational rules, regulations, and policies. These norms are often geared towards the interest of dominant groups (Scott, 2013). However, results show that the norms of

difference were located at the individual [minority students] and were perceived to contribute to differential outcomes. Within this contradiction lies the equitable leadership complexities that Canadian participants raised in regards to having to go on a limb in their decisions when addressing equity and inclusive education issues. For instance, when these participants acknowledged the need for equity because of defacto difference, they re-inscribed assumptions related to those difference. Similarly, when they ignored difference and treated students the same as majority groups or failed to pay attention to the systematic educational practices that perpetuated difference, inequity for these students became guaranteed.

Providing a similar perspective, Artiles (2011) contends that the construction of multiple and sometimes discordant views re-inscribes difference through institutionally sanctioned practice. In cognitive terms, these unresolved contradictions meant that differences were accepted as reasons for student failure and for differential controls as opposed to opportunities for educational institutions and other actors to consider systemic change to existing norms and to scrutinize sensemaking processes that assumed student deficiencies based on their difference. Parallels can also be drawn between such constructs and educational approaches that “stream” students into special needs or applied subject classrooms in Canada and into national, county, or sub county schools in Kenya based on their performance or abilities. These approaches create the illusion of a homogenous classroom as a way of meeting the needs of students. By putting “othered” students, such as those with special needs, minoritized students, or students deemed academically weak in segregated classrooms, Kenyan and Canadian educational systems succeed in erasing the issue of difference from mainstream education and institutional

sensemaking processes. Consistent with Foucault's (1980, 1982) argument that social life is constituted discursively, erasing difference reduces ambiguity in educational practices by re-inscribing inequity through sanctioned equitable leadership knowledge. Therefore, although the norms of difference can highlight opportunities for action, they also orient individuals and institutions to practices that regulate behaviour, construct differences as a deviation, and perpetuate existing social relations by failing to problematize such practices.

School principals are often held to account for differential outcomes of students (Ross & Gray, 2006). This responsibility is entrenched in their roles and responsibilities as implementers of equity and inclusive education goals. From this perspective, inequality and differential outcomes are institutional problems, with schools ultimately responsible and accountable. This institutional responsibility was conceived in three ways. First, participants acknowledged the social context of diversity in schools and the need for institutional supports in order to eliminate differential outcomes for diverse student groups. Second, existing educational structures are geared towards majority needs, participants indicated that they were expected to incorporate educational practices that privilege group strategies for addressing equity and inclusive education problems "rather than the individual player" (Scott, 2013, p. 262) strategies. Third, participants noted that the responsibility for student success was directly linked to institutional investments in teaching and learning resources, capacity development of educators, and nurturing school systems that led to achievement of equity and inclusive education goals. Therefore, although school administrators are implicated, the institutional undertones of administrative practice and the grounding of equitable leadership discourse in institutional pillars underscore institutional responsibility and culpability.

The institutional undertones of equitable leadership also imply that student failures and successes are structurally induced through discursive practices. This argument holds true, in relation to educational policies and regulatory frameworks, including equity and inclusive education policies, rules, and regulations in Kenya and Canada which are premised on individual rights and meritocratic discourse. According to Artiles (2011), individual rights discourse that informs UN Covenants also inform articles of the constitution, the Acts, and equity and inclusive education policies at the school level. However, these discourses entail several consequences for equitable leadership and according to El- Haj (2007), contribute to differential outcomes when they undergird educational systems. One consequence is the interpretation of equity and inclusive education policies to mean that educational outcomes for students constructed as ‘other’, depend on individual efforts (Artiles, 2011) and each school’s ability to identify and eliminate the barriers through alternative placements or models of education (YRCDSB, 2015). Two, underlying individual rights are meritocratic discourses that encourage administrative focus on individual success and failure, as opposed to institutional systems that determine the criterion for success and failure. Expressing similar sentiments, although premised on sustainable learning communities, Mitchell and Sackney (2011) also emphasize that meritocratic discourses place perceptual limits on school principal choices and subsequent knowledge construction. With their focus on individuals, the discourses minimize institutional responsibilities in teaching, assessment, and so forth that give rise to sanctioned knowledge and systemically marginalize students.

Given that equity and inclusive education concepts are built around institutionally sanctioned social norms, its implementation also relied upon a common institutional

framework. Thus, strategies for helping students to achieve equitable access and outcomes in Kenya and Canada exemplified Scott's (2013) description of institutional adaptive strategies. Primarily, in the face of changing institutional realities, institutional actors collectively work together to interpret an event, construct new meanings that enable them to take institutionally sanctioned actions (Scott, 2013). This institutional view suggests that equitable leadership strategies, which included raising funds to ensure that students from low-income households had access to comparable educational resources represent ways that individuals and institutions respond to new realities. However, although this strategy addresses an immediate event, perhaps a strategic starting point for school administrators in Kenya and Canada is to problematize access to education. Moreover, if basic education is truly constructed as a fundamental right, then administrators and policy makers need to raise questions such as: why do students pay fees irrespective of economic status? Why do schools have to raise funds to support programming and students living in poverty? Discursively therefore, how one understands equitable leadership can give rise to new regimes of truth, including those that ensure that techniques and strategies for adequate school funding and effective response to the diversity of needs among learners are incorporated in institutional instruments of control.

Race/Ethnicity and Inequitable Outcomes

Notions of difference are based on pathologies which, as Portelli et al. (2007) assert, are perceived as deviations from an assumed normal state ascribed to other groups because of unequal power relationships. These pathologies, based on Canadian and Kenyan participants' explanations, construct student differences associated with poverty, race, and ability as representative of objective truths and by extension sanctioned

knowledge. Based on this recognition, individual and institutional narratives not only normalized them as a contributing factors to differential access and outcomes, but they also informed and constrained the strategies, procedures, and behaviours associated with these categories of students. Scrutinized from Foucault's (1977) duality of institutional power, the construction of difference as a deviation represents a surveillance mechanism that "produces reality; produces domains of objects and rituals of truth" (p. 194). These domains of truth also form what Mitchell and Sackney (2011) refer to as "dominant organizational narratives that defines choice, governs behavior, and scripts lives" (p. 21) and limit what individuals believe is doable or imaginable in institutional settings (Mitchell & Sackney, 2009; Scott, 2013). Beneath these concepts of truth and reality lay the foundation for individual understandings, motivation, and perceptions of equitable leadership since equity work can only be conceived through these domains of truth.

The analysis shows that equitable leadership knowledge incorporated perspectives that position schools as a microcosm of society. For Canadian participants, inclusion was deemed as central principles of the school system. This perspective promoted equal access for all students based on the idea that since schools are reflective of the society around them, then rules and laws that are applicable in society in general are also applicable in schools. However, socially constructed categories, such as race, language, ability, and poverty levels resulted in different controls being exercised. Within an equity framework for instance, schools as a microcosm of society perspective tacitly supports these differentiations and reproduces social patterns within school life through standardized assessments, policies, value systems, and strategies. The concept also conjures normative images of equitable leadership knowledge and practice related to

equity, fairness, and inclusion for example, that make it challenging for participants to critique the structural inequalities of race/ ethnicity, language, socio-economic class, gender, and disability because these externally constructed concepts are rooted in existing relations of inequality. Davis and Armstrong's (2012) examination of how Canadian school leaders engage difference and racial inequalities in schools, also observe that schools as a microcosm of society perspectives "replicate and reproduce dominant values, beliefs and assumptions through formal and informal authority, and curricular structures and processes" (p. 32). Simply put, schools as microcosm of society narrative is unsuitable for ensuring equity and inclusion in education by failing to "acknowledge that all people are deserving of a liberating education" (El-Haj, 2007, p. 2) or that all students need to realize their full potential that is not necessarily tied to existing social relations.

Social institutions privilege conformity and stability (Scott, 2013) by promoting essentialized views about social reality. Relating essentialized views to educational institutions and student outcomes, Berryhill et al. (2009) observed that when essentialized views are deployed in low-achieving schools, they lead to reduced teacher self-efficacy and self-fulfilling prophecies among students and communities in those educational environments. Adopting Scott's (2013) institutional insights, essentialized views privilege appropriateness of action, instrumentality, and expediency instead of promoting a nuanced approach for equity and inclusion in education. Essentialized views can also convey the notion that equity and inclusive education is achievable through conformity, standardization, and shared logics of action. In the case of difference however, the search for simple clear cut answers for equity and inclusion reinforces inequities. Furthermore, essentialized views about the nature of education or about students who succeed and

those who fail, for example, can perpetuate existing social relations. Accordingly, when equitable leadership knowledge and practice are driven by essentialized discourses that promote educational conformity and stability, inequity for students continue unabated.

Pathologies of Silence

Many scholars, especially those located in the west, have identified persistent racial and ethnic academic achievement gaps in schools (see Artiles, 2011; Bécaries & Priest, 2005; Davis & Armstrong, 2012; Ghosh & Abdi, 2013; Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Singleton & Linton, 2006). However, race/ethnicity and its relationship to differential access and outcomes was not mentioned by Kenyan participants or prominently featured by Canadian participants. Participant failure to acknowledge the relationship between race/ethnicity, either deliberately or by default creates knowledge truths that marginalize these issues in educational practices. To use Mohr and Neely's (2009) terminology, their ways of knowing and acting are mutually constituted. Thus, failing to acknowledge these connections can mean that school administrators are not attuned to the injustice nested in knowledge ideologies that subjectivate (Foucault, 1980, 1982), or those that are perpetuated by invisible privilege, fostered in recursive knowledge relationships (Shields, 2004), and embedded in educational policies and practices that systematically disadvantage some groups.

In the Kenyan context, issues of race and ethnicity were minimized in schools because students were assumed to be homogenous. However, Kenyan schools admit students from diverse ethnic groups and who have different abilities, religions, cultures, languages, health, socio-economic statuses and gender. These differences were not considered as important factors in inequitable access and outcomes for the study

population. A plausible explanation is a denial of the relationship between difference and outcomes by perpetuating a difference neutral institutional reality in Kenya. In turn, educational institutions and school administrators have eliminated these concepts from institutional meaning making properties. As Scott (2013) argues, the inclusion of symbolic structures, such as rules, regulations, and policies, would highlight educational “activities that produce, reproduce...and the resources” (p. 57) that sustain such inequity.

The perspective that equity and inclusive education was about special needs and/or disability (Phasha & Moichela, 2013) and poverty among Kenyan participants also minimized the impact of inequitable access and outcomes related to learning abilities, cultures, languages, health, and gender. This erasure or minimizing of difference caused individuals within the institution not to identify with what is contradictory to existing narratives. For instance, if the institutional perspective is that students had access by virtue of school being there or just by enrolling in a school, then by extension these narratives were legitimated and normalized. Within institutions, such logic is legitimated when endorsed by relevant stakeholders and governance systems (Scott, 2013). The legitimization of such a code of silence ultimately erases critical discourses related to difference by inculcating schemas, rules, and routines that do not engender equitable access and outcomes for all students.

The study’s results indicate that the placement of students in Kenyan secondary schools is based on their performance in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) national exams. As a result, it is not uncommon to find students who had scored low marks in predominantly one school. In many county and sub-county schools, a large portion of enrolled students tended to come from surrounding communities and ethnic

groups. Arguably, such educational practices normalize the placement of groups of students in a school based on their performance. Meritocracy as an educational norm, in turn had created a reality of its own by employing an overly narrow accountability framework (Scott, 2013) to rationalize marginalizing practices. Without conflicting evidence, school administrators conformed and mechanically followed these norms, thereby reinforcing institutional legitimacy claims related to homogeneity. Therefore, even when contradictory student performance in KCSE exams indicates that something is amiss with inequitable access due to streaming, the rational narrative prevails.

Within the Canadian context, connections between race and student outcomes were highlighted in equity and inclusive education policy texts and in participant definitions of equitable leadership as access and equity. However, only two participants openly indicated that there was a direct correlation between race and differential access and outcomes. Other participants used the word race or racial groups sparingly when discussing persistent challenges with equity and inclusion in education. Instead, participants repeatedly used the term minority students. Implicitly, the minority students' terminology was used as a code word for racialized students, understood as students who are viewed as other than White (Jean-Marie et al., 2009). Within institutions, code words are assembled in accordance with specific rules, assigned unique meanings, and considered "value-free" (Baba et al., 2013). Underlying participants' use of the generic term "minority students," however, were meaning systems that subtly conveyed colour blindness and political correctness. Assuming that the term "minority students" was considered value-free, its use also enabled participants to deal with issues that they otherwise found contradictory or disconcerting. Institutionally, the choice to deemphasize

race or the use of a value-free choice was symbolic and deliberate. To use institutional terminology, their capacity to empower, control and constrain behavior is limited to its ability to guide, normalize, and culturally support current practices (Scott, 2013; Weick, 1995). Therefore, without naming race and racial discrimination as the reason some students fail, participants and educational institutions were able to justify past behaviours. The salience of such legitimation practices is evident in equity and inclusive education practices that treat students the same while also attributing failure to imagined deficits inherent within racialized students (Davis & Armstrong, 2013).

The failure by some Canadian participants to name race as the reason some students failed underscored existing discursive practices. One possibility is that discourses that inform equity and inclusion are conceptually oriented by the interests, perspectives, and priorities of the racially privileged (i.e., White people). Similarly, the institutional logics that support equity and inclusive education comprise dominant narratives that are intended to act as predictors of stability and conformity (Scott, 2013). In these discourses race remains unnoticed, based on the culture of power that normalizes and privileges unacknowledged Whiteness (Ryan, 2012). In other words, when equitable leadership is rooted in dominant educational narratives, it is devoid of language that can help participants make sense of race. The point being, where institutions and individuals are oriented by the priorities of privileged groups, then racial differences present contradictions to their existing institutional logics. Ultimately, systemic silencing ensues, ensuring that many school administrators do not perceive racism as a problem in schools (Davis & Armstrong, 2012). Thus, the cultural and cognitive discomfort around naming race can be explained from the perspective of “internalized dominance” (Sensoy &

DiAngelo, 2014, p. 6) that intuitively gives rise to participants desire to protect their own institutional power and the power enjoyed by dominant groups.

Equitable leadership knowledge is complicit in systems of oppression and privilege (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014). To emphasize this complicity, Canadian narratives that some students failed because of difference, lack of skills required to succeed in high school, or because their first language was not English privilege institutional systems geared towards the needs of the majority. Similarly, narratives from Kenya that some students fail because of poverty or their enrollment in tiered school systems fail to problematize the very systems that contribute to those tiers and the identities that they engender. These narratives are built on what Artiles (2011) and Portelli et al. (2007) describe as outlaw ontologies and deficit pathologies, respectively. More so, when educational school systems construct students as “other” based on assumptions about their capabilities, the resulting practices cannot advance equity and inclusion. Instead, they engender strategies and oppressive ideologies intended to ensure that all students conform to the educational norm—that is, the use of standards that are geared to dominant groups. Educational practices and controls that located failure in the individual student without considerations of complicity of educational structures also engendered systems of self-regulation and surveillance that perpetuated inequity and oppression. Point herein, equitable leadership knowledge and strategies that are based on deficit pathologies, for example, represent textual relations that can privilege some while oppressing others. They also perpetuate patterned social interactions, engender unequal power relations (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), and reinforce ideologies which subjectivate individuals (Foucault, 1980).

From the foregoing, educational institutions provide powerful inducements for school principals to comply with institutional knowledge requirements. This process of compliance involves a labyrinth of knowledge rules, regulations, guidelines, and norms. Furthermore, equitable leadership as a concept is linked to diverse knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are emphasized or deemphasized based on (a) constitutive and regulative rules, (b) assumptions that they were widely shared, and (c) individual constructions of contextual educational imperatives. As a result, knowledge concepts reflect the realm of possibilities, images, beliefs, and values attached to and/or anchored in normative, regulative, and constitutive ideas related to education. The next section discusses knowledge institutionalization and a process theory that emerged out of my data analysis.

Institutionalization Processes and a Theory

Equitable leadership knowledge is inextricably linked to existing systems of thought for classifying knowledge and to the collective behaviour of educational stakeholders. In turn, how participants classified their equitable leadership knowledge were aligned with existing discourses and ruling relations. I will discuss these knowledge classifications and actions participants took to connect equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations before presenting the process theory.

Knowledge Classifications and Institutionalization

Knowledge classifications and distinctions promote formal and informal mastery of existing systems of thought (Lam, 2000; Smith, 2001). The distinctions between explicit and tacit knowledge, such as those related to education and equitable leadership, also represent cognitive frames (Wassink et al., 2003) that participants used to make sense of institutional happenings. For instance, when participants distinguished equitable

leadership knowledge as tacit for experiential knowledge and explicit for formal knowledge, they linked their understandings to existing discursive practices. Elizabeth A. Smith (2001) confirms these assertions in her distinction of tacit or informal knowledge as automatic knowledge that “requires little or no time or thought” knowledge (p. 314). Lam (2000) describes tacit knowledge as “intuitive and unarticulated” (p. 490). Other scholars describe tacit knowledge as practical knowledge or knowing without thinking (Polanyi, 1966); and as knowledge grounded in experience or assumed ways of reasoning (St. Germaine & Quinn, 2005). In various texts, explicit knowledge is also described as academic knowledge or knowledge gained from text books (see Goldring et al., 2009; Smith, 2001; Wassink et al., 2003). The use of knowledge classifications as well as reference to specific texts, such as the constitution by Kenyan participants and Ontario Human rights Code by Canadian participants also demonstrate that other systems of thought exist related to law, for instance, that inform equitable leadership knowledge.

As systems of classifying knowledge, ideas such as formal and informal knowledge reinforce, extend, and develop the discursive integrity that underlie institutional logic (Foucault, 1982, 1980). These classifications also order and reorder knowledge and give rise to various forms of social life. In particular, Canadian participant references to their experience “doing equity” confirms a level of mastery that inform or situate their practice in relation to normalizing equity and inclusive education discourses. Knowledge distinctions therefore coordinate social life by reinforcing practices rooted in tacit and explicit knowledge (Scott, 2008a). Similarly, although terminologies such as tacit and explicit knowledge are socially constructed (Smith, 2005), participant actions when connecting equitable leadership knowledge to institutional

obligations, such as gathering/identifying knowledge, establishing the relative importance of knowledge, and confirming institutional knowledge legitimacy represent knowledge institutionalization processes that inform these classifications, school administrators lived reality, and sanction knowledge.

Gathering knowledge required participants to identify applicable explicit and tacit knowledge, which alludes to an interaction between individual knowledge and underlying meaning systems for identifying sanctioned knowledge. The interactions that occurred as participants identified and (de)emphasized applicable knowledge were built around normative, regulative, and cognitive institutional knowledge controls. The interactions were also linked to knowledge symbols, which according to Baba et al. (2013) and Berger and Luckmann (1966), confronted participants as facticity outside themselves or as knowledge realities out there. Simply put, through knowledge gathering, participants interacted with and constructed what they believed was objective knowledge, thereby situating their knowledge within a continuum of thoughts in education and connecting their ideas to a wide array of equity and inclusive education stakeholders and institutions.

Knowledge gathering confirmed what Foucault (1977, 1980, 1982) refers to as dualities of institutional power. Participants used existing systems of knowledge to link their knowledge ideas to institutional imperatives. Point herein, the meaning systems that gave rise to how participants identified professional skills associated with equitable leadership and the embodiment of those skills through constructs, such as shared and inclusive leadership knowledge, also made individuals' subjects and imposed knowledge truths they had to recognize. Fundamentally, the use of underlying institutional logic to objectify emerging equitable leadership knowledge in Kenya for example, is part of

everyday constitutive discourse that structures social life and orders or reorders knowledge. When participants reviewed normative and regulatory controls and consulted communities of practice when gathering knowledge, they confirmed Kakiyama and Sorenson's (2002) claim that knowledge emerges out of human interaction, subjective interpretations, and institutional sensemaking processes. Therefore, knowledge gathering induces other existing meaning systems such as interaction and subjective interpretations.

Knowledge gathering contributes to knowledge objectification. Knowledge objectification as a normalized institutional ritual for organizing knowledge (Kakiyama & Sorenson, 2002; Scott, 2013) helped to transform various equitable leadership knowledge ideas into social facts such as policies and rules. The act of gathering information from the Ontario Ministry of Education's (2009) Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy in the Canadian educational context, for example, elevated information contained in these texts to objective knowledge status. The Strategy was mentioned in all school board equity and inclusive education policies. Thus, normalization of the Strategy into policies helped to organize knowledge by providing a rationale for the implementation of school-level equity and inclusion plans. These included equitable leadership knowledge transmission through staff training in order to support effective policy implementation at all levels of the organization (see TDSB, 2015). Moreover, when participants reflected on and/or identified the Strategy and resultant policies as relevant to equitable leadership knowledge, their actions objectified knowledge contained in these institutional texts and contributed to cognitive as well as normative legitimacy within their local contexts and across institutions.

Steps taken to establish the relative importance of equitable leadership knowledge such as, benchmarking and consultations with colleagues also cannot be separated from knowledge institutionalization processes or the controls exercised through existing social relations. These actions objectified knowledge by privileging binding knowledge expectations, especially those that represent internalized knowledge assumptions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) shared logics of action (Scott, 2008c, 2013). Specifically, practice-based conceptualizations for ensuring equity and inclusion in education, such as shared and inclusive leadership, were constructed within and objectified based on the emphasis placed on these concepts by communities of practice and/or professional associations. In addition, although ideas such as equitable outcomes and access were linked to other cognitive domains such as teaching, management/administration, and law, they were primarily internalized as shared logics of action and binding expectations that empowered and constrained participants' communities of practice.

Communities of practice operate in an authoritative and exogenous manner by outlining normative rules, which according to Scott (2013) introduce a prescriptive, evaluative, and obligatory dimension to social life. Because both benchmarking activities among Kenyan participants and consultations with principal colleagues among Canadian participants involved communities of practice, these activities bring to the fore how knowledge systems are ordered and reordered. On one hand, benchmarking activities helped Kenyan participants to reframe and interpret existing knowledge, in order to arrive at important knowledge for use. Similarly, consultations provided Canadian participants with powerful inducements to comply with prevailing norms. On the other hand, the knowledge that arose from benchmarking and consultations when accepted and

reinforced by other actors took on a new reality as an instrument of control, upon which existing structures and behaviours were compared. This relationship is central to Foucault's (1980, 1982) concepts regarding the duality of institutional power. The processes used to construct knowledge also played an institutionalizing role in addition to contributing to order and stability through a network of knowledge expectations.

The step of establishing knowledge importance linked equitable leadership to existing social relations. For instance, participant review of institutional texts related to equity and inclusive education such as the Education Acts in Kenya and Canada, the Ontario Human Rights Code, and the Constitution of Kenya linked their equitable leadership knowledge constructs to explicit information regarding attendant rights-based elements of equity and inclusion that were contained in these texts. More importantly, as levers of control, these institutional texts were distinguished by the prominence they gave to explicit regulatory, normative, and cognitive rules and processes. Further, the underlying rules and processes emphasized knowledge truths which participants recognized, understood, and abided with on the basis that they represented accepted patterns of organizational relations upon which to situate their equitable leadership knowledge and practices. Extrapolating from Scott's (2004, 2008a, 2013) institutional pillars, the logics underlying participant equitable leadership knowledge presupposed a knowledge truth that had achieved a taken-for-granted status and was legitimated on the basis that it was legally sanctioned, morally authorized, and culturally supported. Therefore, as a mechanism for knowledge institutionalization institutional texts such as policy documents and legislation contained sufficient details (Owusu, 2014) that helped participants to visualize acceptable behaviour expectations and social relations.

The ideas that are deemed as important and the processes that link equitable leadership to shared leadership, equitable access, and equitable outcomes amongst Kenyan and Canadian participants cannot be divorced from the forms of social life that arise from professional socialization activities and knowledge institutionalization processes. As Lunenburg (2011) contends, individuals learn the social knowledge necessary to assume their roles in the organization through socialization. Individuals are also socialized through professional groups that act “as institutional agents—as definers, interpreters, and appliers of institutional elements” (Scott, 2008c, p. 223). Even when a Canadian participant recognized equity work as a grey area, where each scenario required its own set of knowledge, he still relied on knowledge acquired through socialization to establish the importance of particular knowledge clusters, such as those contained in the Human Rights Code, the Strategy, and the Code of Conduct. Symbolically, professional socialization rites, rituals, and ceremonies communicate “information about approved administrative behaviors and reinforce organizational roles and structures” (Armstrong, 2010, p. x) related to equitable leadership. Thus, underlying participants knowledge constructs were rules, policies, obligations, values, and norms that defined equitable leadership knowledge imperatives, which they were socialized to draw upon.

Finally, confirming legitimate institutional knowledge entailed looking at regulative rules, implying that participants assumed the existence of different controls and a set of actors whose interests are better served by a set of rules, sanctions, and incentives that help to institutionalize knowledge. These regulatory processes involve the capacity to inspect conformity to rules and “as necessary, manipulate sanctions—rewards or punishment—in an attempt to influence future behaviour” (Scott, 2013, p. 59).

Internally within the schools, the codes of conduct, policies, and expectations associated with equity and inclusion institutionalized precise, unambiguous and specific conduct, which participants were obligated to obey because of external scrutiny. Externally, sanctioned and readily available institutional texts such as the Constitution, Children's Act, Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, and Kenya's Ministry of Education Guidelines, among others identified aspects of institutional knowledge that informed participants' actions and knowledge toolkit. Internationally, institutional texts, including United Nations Declaration on Human Rights also provided information from which participants could infer knowledge expectations. The specificity coupled with symbolic structures contribute to knowledge institutionalization by ensuring that participants incorporated ideas contained in rules and laws that were linked to textual relations within and across multiple settings.

Emerging Process Theory

The theory that emerged for connecting equitable leadership to institutional obligations represent an interpretation of my interpretation of study data. The theory represents a systematic explanation of processes that were abstracted from school administrator expressions of the steps they took to explicitly connect equitable leadership knowledge concepts to institutional obligations. Consistent with constructivist grounded theory approaches, this process theory considers both the epistemological and ontological dimensions of knowledge (Charmaz, 2006, 2011); that is, the theory is grounded in the understanding that knowledge emerges and is transformed through interaction. It is also grounded in contextual, contingent, and socially constructed knowledge. The theory addresses the stages for connecting both tacit and explicit equitable leadership knowledge

to institutional obligations. The theory incorporates institutionalization processes—externalization, internalization, and objectification—that occur at both the individual level and the social/institutional level. Finally, this emerging theory is premised on the understanding that equitable leadership demands arise within the context of unequal access, differential outcomes, and marginalizing practices in schools.

Stages of Process Theory

There are three distinct stages to the process theory. The stages are differentiated based on the basis of knowledge compliance, mechanisms for diffusion, and the foundations of legitimacy claims. These stages were sequential and recursive, enabling knowledge connections to move from the “conscious to the unconscious and from the legally enforced to the taken-for granted” (Hoffman, 1997, as cited in Scott, 2013, p. 59) and vice versa. The stages are identified as mimetic stage, normalization stage, and transference stage. See Figure 2.

Step 1: Mimetic Stage

The mimetic stage represents the beginning stage of connecting knowledge to institutional obligations. Key processes that participants went through during the mimetic stage included mirroring sanctioned knowledge and deciding which sanctioned knowledge to (de)emphasize. Mirroring occurs when the ideas individuals draw upon simply reflect sanctioned knowledge that they had used in the past, actions they had taken in the past, and/or actions taken within their community of practice to resolve similar issues. In this case, mirroring occurred when participants drew upon existing constitutive or mimetic schemas (Scott, 2013) to replicate prior actions, processes, or approaches that led to good results in the past.

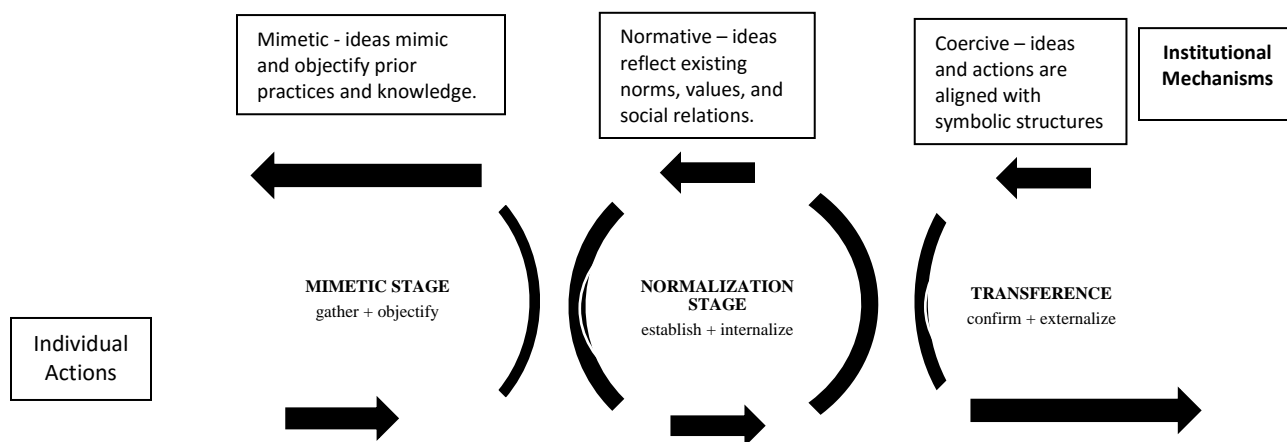


Figure 2. Process theory.

Similarly, mirroring occurs when individuals use information gathered from institutional texts, policies, regulations, relevant guidelines, their practice, and their communities of practice to construct equitable leadership knowledge during the mimetic stage. With its focus on mirroring past actions, the primary questions contemplated at this stage include: How can I use this approach to resolve this problem? How do existing policies, regulatory instruments or other institutional texts relate to this equity issue? How does the policy construct who is responsible? How are individuals expected to act? How is the problem understood? Fundamentally, the focus on *how* knowledge artifacts embedded in participants assumed knowledge and institutional texts were related to, or relevant to the equity and inclusive education issue to be addressed. Subsequently, *how* questions enable individuals to construct and reconstruct narratives related to knowledge application, issue resolution, and experiences in ways that relate knowledge to institutional obligations and equity and inclusive education issues.

The mimetic stage is built around shared logics of action. The necessary conditions supporting mimetic diffusion of knowledge are described by Scott (2013) as “routines, forms, and documents that organize self-reinforcing mental categories” (p. 149), all of which were applicable in relation to equity and inclusion in education. Mimetic isomorphism therefore occurs when individuals adopt and mimic taken-for-granted ideas that they believe are comprehensible, recognizable, and culturally supported (Scott, 2013). Not surprisingly, participant knowledge and practice during the mimetic stage were mediated by taken-for-granted institutional knowledge since the use of comprehensible, recognizable, and culturally supported knowledge is at the core of Scott’s (2013) cultural cognitive legitimacy. In Canada, mimetic isomorphism occurred

when schools and school boards adopted ideas contained in the Ontario Human rights Code, Ontario Equity and Inclusive Strategy, and other practices believed to “represent a higher level of success and achievement in the public eye” (Hanson, 2001, p. 469). Kenyan participants’ practices that reflected shared leadership beliefs contained in the constitution confirm mimetic isomorphism. The emphasis herein, mimicking prior knowledge and actions confirms a knowledge reality experienced in common with others.

Knowledge and practice during the mimetic stage replicates predictable and habitual ways, of “doing” equitable leadership, such as the case with some Canadian participants. Mimetic stage therefore objectifies prior knowledge and institutional homogenizing processes. In particular, although participants might have displayed conscious control of their ideas when identifying knowledge to be gathered, their practice at the mimetic stage was primarily based on prior actions and knowledge that led to successful results. Subsequently, the mimetic stage leaves very little room for individuals to interrogate possible marginalizing features of institutional and personal knowledge, to take into account challenges associated with changing educational contexts, and to incorporate solutions that address new demands.

Step 2: Normalization Stage

The knowledge normalization stage refers to participant actions intended to normalize knowledge, which occurred when they established the relative importance of knowledge prior to taking action and when they internalized knowledge. As the name suggests, normalization is closely associated with the normative conceptions, which according to Scott (2013), arise from common interpretations of institutional issues or are imposed as knowledge norms and values by others with social power. Symbolically,

normalized knowledge beliefs, values, and norms represent binding knowledge expectations (Scott, 2013). For equitable leadership, normalization occurred when the ideas that participants drew upon reflected existing norms, values, and social relations. In particular, during benchmarking, consultations, and review of institutional texts, participants identified institutionalized knowledge that were grounded on texts, experience, and assumed ways of reasoning when establishing knowledge and practice standards. With the focus on arriving at acceptable knowledge, key *what* questions included: What are the knowledge expectations for my role? What does the institution expect from me? What aspects of knowledge can I use to resolve this issue? And what knowledge is everyone [colleagues] using to resolve this issue? Therefore, asking *what* questions enabled participants to not only normalize knowledge, but to also adapt, internalize, and prioritize knowledge on the basis of their understanding of institutional knowledge and practice norms, values, and beliefs.

Normalization reinforces knowledge that are perceived to possess a reality of their own or perceived as “external and coercive facts” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 58) based on the assumption that external knowledge precedents and meanings exist, or that standards and criterion in place enjoy collective acceptance and validation. In this case, equitable leadership knowledge realities were shaped by coercive facts, such as rules, laws, and policies related to acceptable social relations, which ultimately dictated the actions participants were allowed to take through a system of professional and legal sanctioning. Furthermore, based on Berger and Luckmann’s (1966) ideas, the cognitive processes that underlie equitable leadership knowledge normalization can also evoke a second order of meaning as participants connect their ideas to wider cultural cognitive

frames. Specifically, activities such as benchmarking and consultation normalize knowledge and lead to additional meanings based on collective interpretations.

Knowledge normalization is closely linked to knowledge internalization whereby explicit and tacit knowledge is “retrojected into the consciousness” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 61). From the result, knowledge internalization occurred as participants established legitimate knowledge to be used and connected their practice to wider cultural frames, norms, and rules. Knowledge internalization during normalization stage was both a product of socialization rituals and an event signifying conscious representations of “objective” knowledge. Based on the foregoing, the normalization stage is ideal for interrogating knowledge and practice assumptions that engender inequitable outcomes. In particular, because of the convergence of explicit and tacit knowledge during internalization process, participants have the opportunity to question symbolic and normative equitable leadership frames that are grounded on ideas that some students are disadvantaged on the basis of difference. Participants also have the chance to negotiate, contest, and ask who benefits before validating problematic knowledge assumptions.

Step 3: Transference Stage

The transference stage corresponds with the final stage in this process theory. This concept of transference is linked to knowledge externalization as knowledge progresses from ideas to actions that are aligned with symbolic institutional structures. In the case of equitable leadership, knowledge progression from ideation to action was associated with reflective practice, when participants mentally drew from relevant institutional and contextual knowledge as a way of confirming that their ideas were aligned with symbolic institutional structures, or when participants developed symbolic

structures, such as rules and policies that aided in the implementation of equitable leadership. This production of symbolic structures is part of externalization and transference of knowledge “whose meanings come to be shared” (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 61) since they arise during interactions with other stakeholders.

Transference stage emphasizes mental operations that enable participants to confirm *which* and *how* specific legitimate knowledge could be abstracted to resolve educational issues. Key questions revolved around which behaviours are allowed/not allowed? Which third parties or specialized actors have the mandate to inspect conformity? How can I and others demonstrate compliance? As the results confirm, through interactions with communities of practice, professional associations, and regulatory stakeholders, participants were able to decide on which aspects of knowledge to draw upon in the resolution of equity and inclusive education problems. By drawing upon different explicit knowledge, such as law, management, and teaching and looking to symbolic structures such as rules, laws, and sanctions, participants were also able to confirm knowledge alignment with broader network of social relations. Externalization and transference therefore, occur simultaneously when participants are able to resolve *which* and *how* institutional texts inform practice.

Knowledge is also transferred and externalized when individuals participate in activities that lead to the construction of common meanings and when they share knowledge within their communities of practice (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Scott, 2013). Through a team or sector approach to resolving educational problems, Canadian and Kenyan participants shared equitable leadership ideas when they consulted on, and discussed knowledge approaches for resolving equity and inclusive education issues with

various stakeholders. These activities contributed to the creation of new meanings and embedded participant actions in institutionally sanctioned ways of resolving equity and inclusive education problems. The resulting knowledge also led to symbolic structures, such as equity and inclusive education policies and procedures, thereby constituting the cognitive frames for future actions. Therefore, the transference stage is an ideal stage for reflective practice in order to ensure equitable leadership knowledge and practice interrogates educational structures that reinforce existing social relations.

In sum, the three-stage process theory—mimetic, normative, and transference—emerged for connecting knowledge to institutional obligations. These stages were linked to institutional sensemaking processes that contribute to knowledge objectification, internalization, and externalization (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). As a result, these stages contribute to rationalized equitable leadership knowledge truths or the knowledge objects of which people spoke alongside those from regulatory, training, and professional bodies.

Implications and Recommendations for Theory, Practice, and Research

Cognitive, normative, and regulative institutional pillars provided powerful inducements for school principals to comply with institutional knowledge requirements in Kenya and Canada. Equity and inclusive education, as an institutional value end and institutionally inspired concept, was about addressing relations of inequality in order to deliver intended benefits of education to all students. As such, individual and institutional compliance were critical. This process of compliance involved what Scott (2013) described as a labyrinth of knowledge rules, regulations, guidelines, and norms individuals were expected to follow based on assumptions that they were objective and widely shared. Furthermore, emerging out of this study was a process theory for

connecting equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations. According to Schwandt (1997), theories are abstracted from common occurrences and understood as a set of explanatory concepts or a “unified, systematic explanation of a diverse range of social phenomena” (p. 154). To a significant extent, because theories offer general explanations on a particular phenomenon, they can be viewed as a set of facts. However, within a constructivist standpoint, where knowledge is socially constructed, the emerging theory is based on a set of assumptions regarding institutional sensemaking processes and the steps participants took to connect equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations. These presuppositions are not intended to be understood as ways of “doing” equitable leadership, but as a possible way of understanding equitable leadership knowledge and practice.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

Ideas related to equity and inclusive education, educational leadership, institutional expectations, and the ways of acquiring knowledge influenced equitable leadership knowledge and practices. As a result, an immediate implication revolves around how administrators come to know and how they enact equitable leadership practices. A natural starting point is how individuals are prepared and supported to ensure equity and inclusive education in Kenya and Canada. This starting point includes engaging in ongoing debates within the field that interrogate processes for delineating knowledge requirements for the principalship in order to develop a nuanced understanding of equitable leadership knowledge and practice, and equitable educational access and outcomes for students (see Artiles, 2011; Dantley & Tillman, 2010; Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014; Ryan, 2012; Theoharis & Brooks, 2012). Moreover, since institutions

are implicated in equitable leadership knowledge and practice, the implications veer into ongoing debates about institutional knowledge obligations, expectations, and assumptions that undergird the principalship (see Armstrong, 2010; Burch, 2007; Hansel, 2007; Spillane et al., 2011) and equitable leadership. In these debates, attention must be paid to how constitutive rules and knowledge power relations embedded within various cognitive domains are implicated in equitable leadership knowledge and practice.

In many ways, I have reiterated that cognitive, regulative, and normative institutional pillars provided institutional legitimacy. The pillars also structure and are structured by cognitive schemas and represent assumptions about the nature of reality. For equitable leadership knowledge, legitimacy was achieved when participants conformed to a “common definition of the situation, frame of reference, or a recognizable role [for the individual] or structural template” (Scott, 2003, p. 74). This logic underlying institutionally sanctioned equitable leadership knowledge is a fundamental one: Equitable leadership ideas can only achieve cognitive legitimacy when individuals or stakeholders deem the ideas comprehensible, recognizable, and culturally supported. Because of this logic, there are implications related to institutional practices that structure and restructure system-wide aims of equity and inclusive education. Implications also relate to how institutional practices are used to develop systemic and contextual rules, policies, and expectations that constrain and empower equity and inclusive education practices.

Challenges arise when equitable leadership knowledge is located within institutional pillars. Fundamentally, coercive educational norms and regulatory processes that are foundational to education are primarily suitable for dominant social groups. Further, since coercive normative and regulatory mechanisms are externally managed by

other actors (Phillips & Malhotra, as cited in Scott, 2013, p. 79), they can be unsuitable for some contexts, but still determine the social reality for individuals in those contexts. Thus, the resulting educational inequity is tied to coercive norms and regulations that structure the principalship and marginalize some students while privileging others. These equitable leadership knowledge implications relate to concepts that inform the principalship, including those that Ryan (2010) states, construct the principalship as positional and hierarchical authority. Implications also relate notions of equitable leadership as an institutional mechanism for achieving organizational ends since educational structures can marginalize minority groups and because institutional texts that disregard contextual educational needs and particularities of differences can contribute to differential access and outcomes.

The knowledge that participants drew upon were themselves cognitive schemas or models of rationality that represented appropriate ways to pursue educational ends. Like rules, cognitive schemas depend on the fact that they are widely shared or have been promulgated by those granted the right to determine their regulative and constitutive status (Scott, 2013) for their efficacy. As a result, the knowledge base for equitable leadership is located alongside other ideas related to educational leadership, law, and teaching which only fuels the debate about the required knowledge. Implications therefore revolve around understanding the structures that underpin school administrator experiences and the processes that define and contain organizational activities (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011) for equitable leadership. It also revolves around understanding obligatory institutional aspects that are emphasized in knowledge requirements.

On one hand, the diverse conceptualizations and changing demands associated with equitable leadership can be productive since they open up the possibility of documenting what Foucault (1980, p. 792) refers to as “forms of institutionalization” that from the results helped participants rationalize current equitable leadership knowledge and practice discourse. On the other hand, because knowledge and practice arise out of constitutive and regulative knowledge rules (Scott, 2013), it can be difficult to understand what is (de)emphasized and by whom, because of the invisibility of discursive practices and structures that created, validated, and enforced equitable leadership knowledge. Hence, implications therefore entail understanding these contradictions as well as school administrators’ ability to engage in critical reflective practices and to re-imagine equitable leadership knowledge and practice in ways that contribute to its comprehensibility, acceptability, and legitimacy as a valued educational norm in Kenya and Canada.

Although concepts such as shared and inclusive leadership, equity, and fairness are nested in broader institutional frameworks, they also reflect democratic collaborative conceptions (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2017) that are necessary for opening up democratic space for marginalized groups and eliminating disparities of access and outcomes in Kenya and Canada. Implications therefore, include individual and communities of practice ability to recognize institutional behaviours and knowledge assumptions that marginalize (Dantley & Tillman, 2010) and to imagine alternative equity and inclusive education practices and policies. Based on these implications, the following recommendations lay out some possibilities for equitable leadership knowledge, practice and theorizing in Kenya and Canada.

Recommendations for Practice in Kenya

Diverse equitable leadership knowledge stemming from ingrained schema and institutional imperatives as well as limited recognition of the impact of difference and institutional practices such as streaming on student access and outcomes contributed to differential access and outcomes in Kenya. Therefore, it is recommended that the Kenyan Ministry of Education and Teachers' Service Commission, as key stakeholders in education, should engage educational leaders on equitable leadership. Engaging educators will open up democratic space and reaffirm shared and inclusive perspectives of equitable leadership, for example, that appear to be widely shared by school principals. The underlying logic being, engaging in dialogue will lead to externalization of equitable leadership knowledge, and lead to the development of processes and tools to articulate concepts that can lead to equitable access and outcomes for all students. Nestor-Baker and Hoy (2001) also confirm that knowledge or ideas spread when individuals are engaged in dialogue. Envisioned dialogue should infuse understandings that take into account the moral basis of equitable leadership (Ryan, 2010) and aspects of difference that impact students to ensure equitable access and outcomes for all students.

The absence of discernible regulative mechanisms at the school level related to equity and inclusive education was clear in the Kenyan schools that participated in the study. Instead, participants relied on the Constitution of Kenya, Ministry of Education regulations, TSC documents, the Children's Act, and school policies such as the School Codes of Conduct when conceptualizing equitable leadership knowledge and practice. This absence of an equity and inclusive education policy framework at the school level and recent the emergence of equitable leadership knowledge created the conditions for

the construction of multiple and sometimes discordant views of equitable leadership which Artiles (2011) reminds us has distinct consequences for student access, student outcomes, and institutional responses. Importantly, since equity and inclusive education is an institutional responsibility enshrined in the constitution, it is vital for schools and principals to be provided with support and guidance. The support should include actions by the Ministry of Education that ensure a coherent policies and procedures framework exists in all schools. In particular, the Ministry of Education and the school Board of Management, in consultation with various stakeholders, should develop equity and inclusive education policies. Furthermore, to ensure that school practices do not erase the realities of difference or endorse deficit discourses, these policies should position differences as strengths that students bring. In tandem with the development of equity and inclusive education policies, the Ministry of Education should broaden notions of accountability, excellence, and success that can be adopted by educational institutions.

The perennial challenges to delineating a relevant knowledge base for the principalship and the emphasis placed on different cognitive components underscore the importance of appropriate training for the principalship and for clarity in regards to equitable leadership knowledge. Echoing Lazaridou (2009), I call upon teacher training institutions in Kenya to develop specialized and comprehensive training for school principals. This training should be grounded in the Kenyan context and should address matters of equity and inclusion in education. This recommendation is threefold:

1. Institutions of higher learning in Kenya should take a leadership role in developing post graduate and graduate programs that prepare individuals for the principalship and for addressing issues of equity and inclusive education in

Kenya. The proposed programs should build on current management and administration courses at teacher training levels, and include concepts such as social justice and equitable leadership.

2. Given the complexity of the principalship and equitable leadership, the training programs for school principals must help individuals to develop critical thinking and reflection skills. A possible approach towards this end is to include strategies for problematizing current understandings related to the principalship and equitable leadership. These programs also need to inculcate a critical approach to leadership since “traditional kinds of leadership are incongruent with the practical challenges that principal’s face in schools” (Jwan & Ongodo, 2011, pp. 409-410). A critical stance will ensure that educational leaders are able to challenge Kenyan educational structures that privilege some and disadvantage others (Furman & Shields, 2005) and are “built upon the so-called neutrality of objective reality” (Bogotch, 2002, p. 3).
3. Prior to and during the development of formal training for the principalship, it is important to identify, reconfirm, and delineate knowledge requirements, values and principles for equity and inclusive education. The process of identifying, reconfirming, and delineating knowledge will elucidate knowledge needs for the principalship and contribute to quality standards of education in Kenya (Ibrahim, 2011) and reduce the culture of impunity in schools (Sang, 2010).

Recommendations for Practice in Canada

Study participants from Canada demonstrated considerable awareness of equitable leadership knowledge since they had been “doing” equitable leadership for a number of

years. Yet, results confirm Ryan's (2012) assertion that most school leaders are unprepared for the challenges of ensuring equity and inclusion in education. Inequities also persist in Canadian schools related to achievement gaps, academic streaming, and unequal allocation of resources. Implicitly, existing equitable leadership practices fall short of what is required to ensure all students succeed in Canadian schools. Therefore, it is important for individuals to interrogate assumptions that underlie the concept of "doing" equitable leadership from a lived reality perspective. Specifically, I recommend that school principals "doing" equity work reconceptualize equitable leadership as a social structure in the same way as issues of race, gender, disability, poverty, among others, that contribute to student marginalization are conceptualized (see Andreasen, 2000; Artiles, 2011; Risman, 2004; Saraga, 1998). By so doing, they will be compelled to analyze how their ways of doing equitable leadership are embedded in the interactional, individual, and institutional dimensions of the principalship. Results from the analysis will inform their practices and contribute to educational equity.

Individuals learn social and professional knowledge through socialization activities, such as mentoring and coaching (Armstrong, 2010; Lunenburg, 2011; Zembylas & Iasonos, 2010). Although in the case of equitable leadership these socialization activities can maintain existing power structures because they are normalized within the daily rituals of schooling (Armstrong, 2010), they can also be used to engender new equitable leadership norms. Moreover, Canadian participants who had been school administrators for more than 10 years indicated that they had been "doing equity" for a number of years and in some cases were able to problematize equitable leadership knowledge concepts. Therefore, assuming that these individuals' efforts have

resulted in genuine access and equity for all students, it is important for experienced school administrators to act as mentors and coaches for newer administrators and other colleagues. In this recommendation, school administrators and professional groups as “definers, interpreters, and applicers of institutional elements” (Scott, 2008c, p. 223) are encouraged to incorporate strategies for restructuring educational systems in their mentoring, coaching, and professional socialization activities for new administrators.

Institutional texts were key to equitable leadership knowledge and practices. However, although the Ontario Leadership Framework contributed to the school administrators’ cognitive frameworks by outlining domains related to educational leadership knowledge, there was very little reference to equity and social justice. This omission of a key institutional obligation and value-end by an institutional knowledge agent (Scott, 2008c, 2013) can trigger the use of ideas that contribute to persistent inequities, multiple interpretations, and erasure of certain types of difference in discursive practices. Such omissions confirm that discourses that inform existing “doing equity” in Canada are conceptually oriented by the interests, perspectives, and priorities of privileged groups and are not intended to help individuals make sense of student differences, other than as outlaw ontologies. Therefore, although terminologies such as equity and inclusion appear to be common catch-phrases, it is still vital for school administrators to incorporate reflective, critical, and integrative thinking in their educational practices. This approach will ensure that they are able to view complex equitable leadership issues in nuanced ways, keeping all factors in mind, including those that are systemic in nature. In addition, school administrators should routinely document the types of equitable leadership issues, knowledge domains used, and the institutional

texts that inform their actions. Such actions enable individuals to understand the cognitive domains they draw upon, identify institutional texts that influence their practice, and avoid the use of equitable leadership practices that reinforce relations and institutional structures that marginalize some students.

The institutional undertones of knowledge construction imply that institutional structures contribute to equity and inclusive education. One also infers from these institutional linkages that existing concepts of equitable leadership can reify educational systems that contribute to inequity. To minimize potential negative consequences, I echo Marshall and Oliva (2010) by recommending that the educational sector should develop tools for interrogating the centrality of various practices to equitable leadership. For instance, the sector could develop a framework for “engaged critical inquiry,” understood as participatory and systematic attention to actions, in order to help school principals unravel how intersecting networks of knowledge, relationships, and expectations contribute to differential access and outcomes for some students.

Implications and Recommendations for Theory and Research

A three-stage process theory for connecting equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations emerged from the study. This theory holds important implications for unpacking equitable leadership knowledge imperatives. Primarily, this theory contributes to a better understanding of equitable leadership knowledge and practice and the information could be used to develop templates for interrogating equitable leadership practice in schools. Furthermore, since widespread institutional changes that can bridge the gap between theory and effective response to injustices are

sparse (Griffiths, 2003), this process theory offers a template for researchers to advance and explore institutional practices that contribute to effective responses to injustice.

The process theory emerged out of a retrospective or post hoc examination (Grand, Braun, Kuljanin, Kozlowski, & Chao, 2016) of individual and institutional equitable knowledge events and as individuals reflected on their actions and steps they took to connect equitable leadership to institutional obligations. These reflections do not capture the dynamic processes that occur naturally within and between the institution and individuals as they connect their ideas to institutional obligations during the resolution of equitable leadership issues. Similarly, I acknowledge that recommendations emanating from an emerging process theory should be tempered pending further validation (Grand et al., 2016). Therefore, additional research is needed before widespread adoption of these ideas in order to generate data that help to illuminate the how for connecting equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations. The result of such endeavours could lead to a better understanding of equitable leadership practices and ultimately lead to effective and systematic strategies for ensuring equity and inclusion in education. Second, research is needed to further validate the theory. These studies could observe participants and focus explicitly on how individuals connected explicit and tacit equitable leadership knowledge to institutional obligations. Moreover, since this theory emerged from individual reflections of past events, future research should incorporate observation of educational leaders engaged in cognitive tasks related to equitable leadership. This approach will help to eliminate theoretical misconceptions and identify alternative processes that are specific to both explicit and tacit knowledge.

Conclusion

This study employed various concepts associated with institutional theory and institutional pillars to demonstrate that equitable leadership, as an institutionally inspired concept, is conceived within the confines of institutional sensemaking processes. Specifically, the equitable leadership practices were supported by institutional pillars and systems of control located at multiple levels, which included international bodies, governments, professional associations, ministries of education, school boards, and individuals. From the study, the systems of control included laws, regulations, policies, codes of conduct, and so forth. In other words, equitable leadership was possible because of the many “unobtrusive controls exercised by shared symbolic systems” (Scott, 2013, p. 190) that inform and were informed by equity and inclusive education goals.

Furthermore, because of the study’s use of an institutional theory lens to explain equitable leadership, these findings offer possible explanations of equitable leadership knowledge in ways that related the knowledge and practice to ruling relations. These ruling relations are based on knowledge constructions and professional contexts between differently empowered institutional and individual actors (Scott, 2008a, 2013; Smith, 2005). Similarly, although participants’ professed similar goals of delivering the intended benefits of education to all students, their focus differed based on the extent the ideas that they drew upon were rooted in the different institutional pillars. These institutional undertones means that the very ideas that undergird equitable leadership can reinforce existing ruling relations. These ideas are also open to manipulation and/or deliberative knowledge processes (Scott, 2013) that dictate subjective interpretation of improvised

and situated practices (Kakihara & Sorenson, 2002) while contributing to comprehensibility, acceptability, and legitimacy (Scott, 2013) of equitable leadership.

The steps participants took to connect their equitable leadership knowledge ideas to institutional obligations also reflect the realm of institutional possibilities, images, beliefs, and values for equitable leadership. By combining institutional theory with equitable leadership knowledge, this research offers a unique glimpse into assumed but rarely explained institutional undertones of equitable leadership knowledge. These results confirm that a lot of work is needed that goes beyond surface treatment. That is, there is a need to problematize knowledge that informs equitable leadership practices to ensure that they result in equity for and inclusion of minority, poor, and racial groups who continue to experience differential access and outcomes in schools in Kenya and Canada.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. This study focuses on equitable leadership. Can you tell me what equitable leadership means to you?
2. Please take a moment to reflect on your experiences as school administrator. What are some issues related to equitable leadership that you deal with or are concerned with?
3. Regarding the issue(s) you just described, what is it about this particular issue that makes it stand out? (probe for understandings of equitable leadership and institutional factors)
4. Reflecting on the issue that you have identified and your experience as a school administrator, what specific knowledge or ideas (school norms, policies, procedures, or regulations) did you find useful for resolving the issue? How were they useful?
 - a. Probe for formal and tacit elements of knowledge related to equitable leadership.
5. How did you put your understanding of the knowledge/ideas described into practice?
 - a. Probe for examples of issues/experiences/involvement.
 - b. Probe for institutional processes, contexts, obstacles, and supports.
6. How are the ideas you have shared supported by school policies, procedures, and practices?
 - a. Probe for regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements.

7. Can you give other examples where you have explicitly linked institutional obligations, rules, or norms to the knowledge that you require to do your job or to your actions?
 - a. Probe for issues/experiences/involvement and connections to institutional factors.
 - b. Probe for institutional processes, contexts, obstacles, and supports.
 8. Have you experienced any obstacles related to equitable leadership? What are they and how did you resolve these obstacles in order to ensure equity?
 9. Has your understanding of knowledge and practice related to equitable leadership changed over the years? If so, how has it changed?
 - a. Probe for what triggered the change, milestones, issues, and timelines.
 - b. Probe for institutional processes, contexts, obstacles, and supports.
 10. Are there issues that we have not discussed which you believe are central to how you construct your knowledge and practice and would like to add?
- Do you have any questions?

Appendix B

Participant List

Name (Pseudonym) and Title	Country	Gender	Type of school
Patrick, Principal	Kenya	Male	Boys' Boarding Designation: County-level school
John, Principal	Kenya	Male	Mixed day school Designation: County-level school
Benson, Principal	Kenya	Male	Mixed Day school Designation: County-level school
Diane, Principal	Kenya	Female	Girls' Boarding (Church affiliated) Designation: county-level school
Mary, Deputy Principal	Kenya	Female	Mixed Day school Designation: Sub-county school
Mercy, Deputy Principal	Kenya	Female	Girls' Boarding (Church affiliated) Designation: County-level school
Julian, Principal	Canada	Male	Public School Board in the GTA
Dorothy, Principal	Canada	Female	Catholic School Board in the GTA
Sophia, Principal	Canada	Female	Public School Board in the GTA
Matthew, Principal	Canada	Male	Public School Board in the GTA
Peter, Principal	Canada	Male	Public School Board in the GTA

Appendix C

Consent Form

Date: **[Insert Date]**

Project Title: The Influence of Institutional Factors on School Administrators' Constructions of Knowledge and Practice.

Principal Investigator (PI): Dr. Denise Armstrong,
Department of Education, Brock University
Telephone: ([REDACTED]); **E-mail:** darmstrong@brocku.ca

Principal Student Investigator: Perez Oyugi, Student
Department of Education, Brock University
Telephone: [REDACTED]; **E-mail:** po02qb@brocku.ca

INVITATION

You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to explore how institutional factors influence school administrator constructions of knowledge and practice related to equitable leadership in Canada and Kenya. Out of this understanding, it is hoped that a theory will emerge on the processes that school administrators use to link knowledge and practice.

WHAT'S INVOLVED

As a participant, you will be asked participate in one face to face interview for approximately sixty-minutes and a follow up telephone interview for approximately sixty minutes. You will also be asked to choose a quiet time and place where you will not be interrupted, overheard, or inadvertently record other voices. During the interviews you will be asked to reflect on your experiences as a school administrator. You will be asked open-ended questions related to your understanding of equitable leadership, including actions taken, the knowledge that you find useful for school administration, and how you put into practice school ideas related to administrative knowledge and practice. Participation will take approximately one hundred and twenty minutes (two interviews of sixty-minutes) of your time.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS

There are no financial benefits to participate in the study. However, possible benefits of participation include providing school administrators with an opportunity for them to deepen their knowledge, through reflection on how institutional factors influence their constructions of knowledge and practice. The study also provides school administrators with an opportunity to contribute towards a global understanding of administrative practice and provide information that can lead to the development of strategies for equitable leadership and to the professional development activities of administrators.

There are no known or minimal risks exist associated with participation in this study. However, because the interview questions ask participants to reflect on their practice, you may feel uncomfortable or feel that the questions are evaluative of your institutions and practice.

To mitigate this possible social risks, your information and information related to your school or school board will not be identified in study report(s). We will also ensure that any quotations or any other information you provide during the interview cannot be traced back to you by developing a composite picture of all study participants and their contributions.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information you provide will be kept confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study; however, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. Data collected during this study will be stored will be locked in a cabinet to which only the Principal Student Investigator has a key. Electronic and recorded data will be password protected, and only the principal investigator will have access to the files. Data will be kept for five years after which time the data will be destroyed.

Access to this data will be restricted to the Principal Student Investigator. The Principal Investigator will have the right to review the data upon request, but will only do so to establish data credibility. Data will be reviewed in the presence of the Principal Student Investigator.

AUDIO TAPING

The interviews will be audio taped to allow the Principal Student Investigator to confirm and clarify information regarding the study. The audio tapes will be stored in a locked cabinet to which only the Principal Student Investigator has a key. After five years, the audiotapes will be destroyed.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time and may do so without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Should you choose to withdraw from the study, your data will not be used in the study report.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

Results of this study may be published in professional journals, presented at conferences and disseminated among Faculty of Education staff at Brock University. Feedback about

this study will be available by contacting the Principal Student Investigator via e-mail upon completion of the study.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact Perez Oyugi, Principal Student Investigator or the Principal Investigator, Dr. Denise Armstrong using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University [File #14-012 – ARMSTRONG]. If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca.

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D

TCPS 2: CORE—Certificate of Completion

PANEL ON RESEARCH ETHICS <small>Navigating the ethics of human research</small>	TCPS 2: CORE
	
<h2><i>Certificate of Completion</i></h2>	
<p><i>This document certifies that</i></p>	
<p>Perez Oyugi</p>	
<p><i>has completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE)</i></p>	
Date of Issue:	16 March, 2012

Appendix E

Brock University Research Ethics Board Clearance Letter



Brock University
Research Ethics Office
Tel: 905-688-5550 ext. 3035
Email: reb@brocku.ca

Social Science Research Ethics Board

Certificate of Ethics Clearance for Human Participant Research

DATE: 8/25/2014

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: ARMSTRONG, Denise - Graduate and Undergraduate

FILE: 14-012 - ARMSTRONG

TYPE: Ph. D. STUDENT: Perez Oyugi
SUPERVISOR: Denise Armstrong

TITLE: The Influence of Institutional Factors on School Administrators' Constructions of Knowledge and Practice.

ETHICS CLEARANCE GRANTED

Type of Clearance: NEW

Expiry Date: 8/31/2015

The Brock University Social Science Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above named research proposal and considers the procedures, as described by the applicant, to conform to the University's ethical standards and the Tri-Council Policy Statement. Clearance granted from 8/25/2014 to 8/31/2015.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored by, at a minimum, an annual report. Should your project extend beyond the expiry date, you are required to submit a Renewal form before 8/31/2015. Continued clearance is contingent on timely submission of reports.

To comply with the Tri-Council Policy Statement, you must also submit a final report upon completion of your project. All report forms can be found on the Research Ethics web page at <http://www.brocku.ca/research/policies-and-forms/research-forms>.

In addition, throughout your research, you must report promptly to the REB:

- a) Changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- b) All adverse and/or unanticipated experiences or events that may have real or potential unfavourable implications for participants;
- c) New information that may adversely affect the safety of the participants or the conduct of the study;
- d) Any changes in your source of funding or new funding to a previously unfunded project.

We wish you success with your research.

Approved:


Jan Frijters, Chair
Social Science Research Ethics Board

Note: Brock University is accountable for the research carried out in its own jurisdiction or under its auspices and may refuse certain research even though the REB has found it ethically acceptable.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and clearance of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of research at that site.